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HOME LIFE IN RUSSIA

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BY

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83511

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

I AM conscious of the fact that I have by no means been able to exhaust the subject of Home Life in Russia. Russia is more a geographical expression than a country; it is a conglomeration of many races and nations, who differ considerably from each other in their manners, customs, and daily life. I found it, therefore, almost impossible to condense within the framework of one volume a survey of the home life of all the nations inhabiting the vast Empire of the Tsar. Whilst writing the following pages I have constantly been aware of my difficulty—feeling that the task ought to have been undertaken by several men instead of one. I crave the indulgence of the reader, but I hope that those who have travelled in Russia will understand and realize the impossibility of presenting a complete account of the habits and customs of all the Russians as they are practised in different parts of the Empire. Besides, since I left Russia many things have altered—and especially the life and habits of the upper classes have undergone a considerable change and often differ but little from those of Western Europe. The vast mass of the peasants, however, is conservative and remains just as it was many centuries ago. It is for this reason that I have devoted much space to the description of peasant life, both in Little and Great Russia, to the ceremonies and festivals of the Moushiks—which are such peculiar and interest-

ing features of a country about which the average reader, after all, knows but little. I have also described the daily round of family and social intercourse, the life at school, and the University, the outlook on religion and social questions. In the preparation of this volume I have relied not only upon memory and the reminiscences of my childhood, but also upon various Russian authors who have described several aspects of Russian Home Life. If I have succeeded in adding a little to the knowledge the average English reader possesses of Russia—then my labour will not have been in vain. I cannot conclude these preliminary remarks without expressing my thanks to my friend Miss C. A. Arfwedson, who has kindly read the final proofs.

A. S. R.

LONDON, *February* 1913.

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HOME LIFE IN RUSSIA

PART I

THE COUNTRY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: TRAVELLING AND RAILWAYS

BEFORE we glance at the Russian Railway System itself, we will observe how it differs from the systems at work in other European countries. It will then be easier for us to take the reader on a journey through Russia to study some phases of the life and manners of the people.

The first thing that we notice on entering the country is that the Russian track has not the usual gauge. Russia has introduced a much broader gauge, and the natural consequence is that foreign stock cannot run on Russian lines. Was this done purposely—as a means of excluding foreigners, or of closing Russia, or was it a condition of things which happened by chance, brought about by the want of observation of Russian engineers—who can say?

Let it suffice that when the first Russian line was opened there was nothing for the rest to do but accommodate themselves to the arrangement, to keep the internal traffic on one plan. Many trials have been made since to make a direct intercourse possible by fitting the carriages with movable axles, but this does not fulfil expectations, and the consequence is that passengers must alight at the Russian frontier and goods must be unloaded.

There are only three classes in the Russian trains; but just in Russia, where the difference between the classes

of people is so enormous, a fourth class ought to be compulsory. It is true that on some lines "black people" and workmen are separated from respectable people, but the practice is not general. It is often observed that third-class passengers, at intermediate stations, exchange tickets and flee to the second class—for the lookers-on a real amusement, but an uncomfortable position for those caught in the act. They have also tried to carry workmen in uncovered cars, but that mode of conveyance is not to be desired.

The poor country people can hardly ever use the railway, as they are not in a position to pay third-class fare, and one can see workmen, labourers, and here and there peasants carrying their boots over their shoulders, and walking along the line, day after day. In these days of "raging" propensity to settle in other lands, this has a particular meaning. A great deal of national work and strength is taken away, and the national productiveness is lost. This is easy to understand; it is a simpler matter for the Russian peasant to lose three or four days' work than to pay a railway fare. To the greater evils—for we will not look at the smaller ones—we must add that Russian railways run on single lines; very rarely do we come across a double line. In Germany single lines are the exception. In technical phraseology, single lines are only half lines. A well-known statesman was heard to say that single railways are no railways. The Russian railways thus lose their importance, and even such lines as from St Petersburg to Warsaw, are run on single lines. What a calamity this would be in mobilizing the army! Then neither the transport of troops nor private intercourse could go on properly.

As we have seen the most important faults of Russian railways, it is much pleasanter to see in what respects the Russian railway is superior to foreign lines, and it

will be seen that they have advantages. As soon as one comes to the Russian frontier, either from Prussian or Austrian territory, all passengers must alight and step on to a Russian train, which is very different from the one just left. The carriages are so made that one can walk about freely. The officials are polite in their attentions to travellers, and complaints about the conductor or principal conductor are very seldom heard. The only drawback is the continual demand to show your ticket. Whilst an inspector comes and goes by one door, another at once enters by another. People travelling without tickets are called "blind passengers." On most lines each carriage has a lavatory, which is an advantage not to be gainsaid. The heating arrangements in winter are perfect.

If we look at the locomotive we find the tender full of material for burning—and the Russian tenders are much larger than those of other countries—and what material! —beautiful wood at which even to look would be a pleasure if it was not destined to be burnt as fuel for the engine. We have elsewhere spoken about the manner in which the Russian forests are being destroyed, and of late years there has been a certain amount of legislation commanding the use of coal and naphtha, which is found in the Caucasus, but the carriage of these natural products is too dear at present, and then the trees stand there ready by the side of the line.

There are good waiting- and refreshment-rooms in Russian railway stations for first- and second-class passengers, and scarcely any European country can compete with Russia in this respect. The furniture is comfortable and the food excellent. A huge samovar and a coffee-machine hiss day and night in summer and winter, and tea and coffee are prepared—in large glasses—and one cannot get better in the restaurants of Western

Europe. And this is not in one or two stations, but at all without exception. The prices are moderate, that is, the usual Russian prices are charged.

The stations are not grand buildings as one sees sometimes in other countries, but they are arranged for use. Moscow has six stations, and St Petersburg four of very modest nature. There are no police at the stations, only gendarmes.

There is practically no uniform for the employés of the railways in Russia. Many wear the national dress—high boots, short kaftan with belt, and astrakan cap.

As soon as a passenger has to go from one line to another, he finds himself in all sorts of unpleasantnesses. The different lines quarrel over freight charges, and for a long time the express train from St Petersburg started just before the train from Moscow arrived; and at smaller stations it is often worse.

The tickets have the name of the station, number, date, price, tax, and the total sum printed on them.

General Greigh, January 1879, introduced a railway ticket tax, which extra expense is avoided by first-class passengers travelling second class, and so on. The second-class passengers suffer the tax patiently, having always the option of travelling third class. But the third-class travellers have no way out of it, so the tax falls on those who are least able to afford it. This only tax brings in three millions of roubles, while it impedes and seriously hinders free movement.

The railways are mostly guaranteed by the State, so the State has to give to the railway what it obtains through the tax. It is unfortunate that the Government has the intention to continue taxing the railways.

Travelling through Russia, no matter in which direction, one is struck by the uniformity of the picture. The traveller meets endless forests, many miles long, without

any roads, and overgrown and full of briers; many of these forests are traversed by a crooked path about thirty miles long—an unmade road not to be used in bad weather. Or he goes along through rye fields—again many, many miles—nothing but rye, rye, rye. Or, again, he sees before him miles of flat land which was once ploughed and now lies fallow for, perhaps, ten years or more before coming under the plough again.

And so, by the side of forest, fields of rye, and fallow land, the express train travels for half an hour without seeing any habitation, except some station building and waiting-rooms. The villages lie, perhaps, five or ten miles apart. An unaccustomed foreigner, driving in a Russian *tarantas* over a bad road, has some very bad moments. How can the road be well kept when the distances are so enormous? But in the winter it is "uncanny," even to those accustomed to it. Everything is covered with a white veil, sometimes very thick indeed, and one drives over the eternal snow over a sea of ice. That human beings pass along is only to be recognized by the twigs and straws which they stick into the roadsides to mark the way, slightly yellowish; and only when no fresh snow has fallen, is the narrow road distinguishable—the road as narrow as the sleigh, and on which only one horse can pass at a time. If it be necessary to drive two horses, they must be harnessed with very long reins, tandem-fashion. The driver uses a *knout* and cheers the animal on with his voice. Only the voice of the driver and the tinkling of bells are heard, accompanied by the howling of the wind and the scrunching of the snow under the sleigh, and so on for hours.

How many lives are lost yearly in Russia from the winter cold! How many find eternal rest under the snow-white coverings! The peasant who returns intoxicated from some feast, lads who go three miles to school, the

priest who has driven off to carry consolation to some dying man, or some labourer sent to the post by his cruel master in spite of the bad weather, or some midwife hastening to a woman in pain. Is it possible to cultivate such vast districts ? Or is it an easy matter for a bare-footed child to run some miles to school ? And was it difficult for those destroyers of civilization to keep the people in the dark ? And if, in spite of all this, the thought of Liberty has found its way into a Russian village, is that not a miracle ? Is it to be wondered at that it should show itself in some rough fashion ? No, for life in Russia is something quite different from life in the West of Europe.

CHAPTER II

VILLAGES IN LITTLE RUSSIA AND GREAT RUSSIA

THE mode of life of the well-to-do Russian people, and, above all, of the Russian nobility and Court circles, varies but little from that of other European countries, and superficial observers and travellers who have studied Russian life in big cities and urban districts find that life there resembles to a great extent life on the Continent. Real, national, Russian home life should be studied not so much in towns and urban districts as in villages. " Le tiers État c'est tout " said the men of the French Revolution, and with a slight change these words may be applied to the Russian peasantry. Les monshires c'est tout. The truly Russian atmosphere is to be breathed in the country, among peasants and landed proprietors, among village priests and village teachers. Here one finds the old home life of Russia, old customs, ceremonies, religious beliefs, and superstitions. Before entering a Russian town and paying a visit to a Russian home in Moscow, we shall therefore first take the traveller to a village and introduce him not only to the peasants and their daily tasks, but also to other village inhabitants and types. The task is not an easy one. Not only for the foreigner but for the Russian himself is it difficult to gain access to the Russian peasant.

The landed proprietor, the priest, and the *semski natshalnik* are the only intelligent people who have intercourse with the peasants and villagers ; but the present situation is propitious to them all, and they all live upon

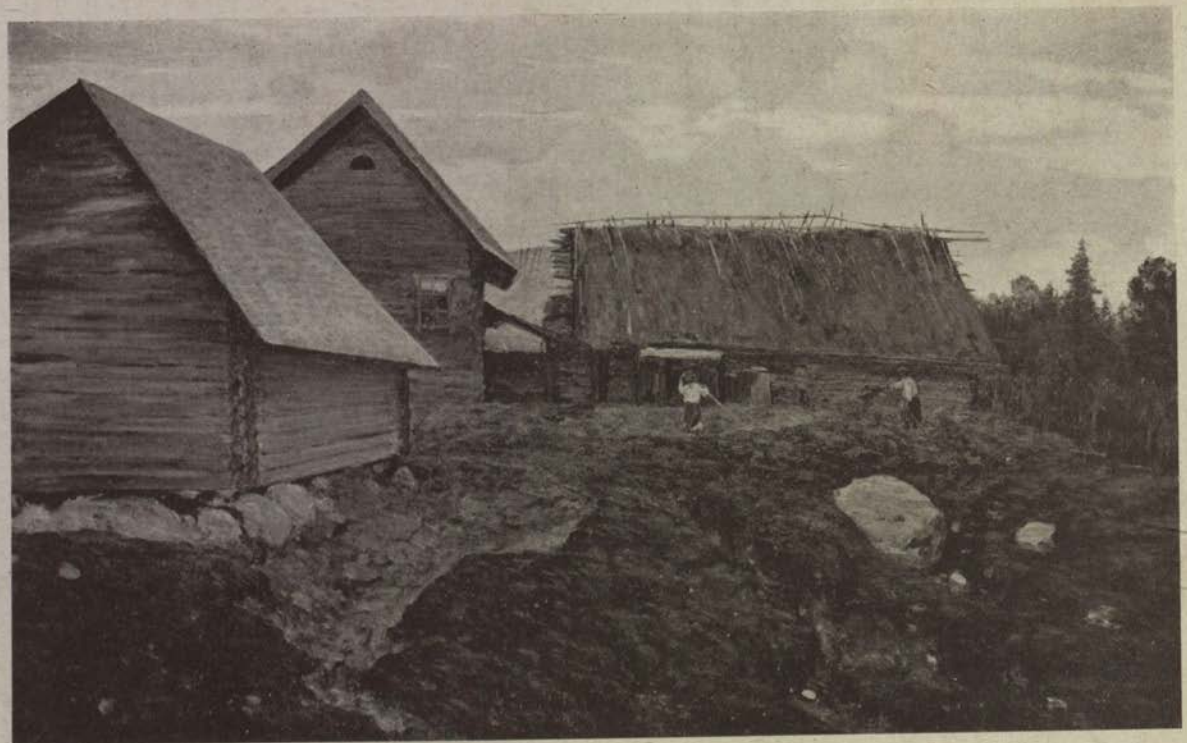
it, and gain, in different methods, from the poverty and the dishonesty of the peasants.

As soon as some intelligent person appears, one who does not belong in some way to the village parasites, he is looked at askance, and the question is asked, "Why is he here? Will he, perhaps, instruct the moujik? Will he, perhaps, make him open his eyes to actualities?"

Such an unbidden guest is quickly got rid of, or things are explained to him and he leaves the place of his own accord. If the *semtsvo* thinks it necessary to send a doctor, or an engineer, to the village, it can only be done with the consent of the governor, who makes all kinds of inquiries of the police concerning the person nominated. On one side the foreigner is kept out of the village so that he shall not tell the outside world what goes on, whilst on the other side the Russian is kept out of the village so that he shall carry no illuminating light to the villagers. Is it then to be wondered at that Europeans know so little of a Russian village when Russia herself knows nothing? Is it to be wondered at that he who likes fishing in dirty water should speak in the name of the people and should work in secret? The whole of Russian political life is based on this lie.

When we speak of Russian villages, it must be borne in mind that in that vast Empire of the Tsar, consisting of such a conglomeration of races and nations, there is a difference not only between the village of the Russian and say the Moldavian or the Finn, but also between those of Great Russia and Little Russia. The Great Russian differs in many of his characteristics from the Little Russian, and his mode of life is consequently not quite the same.

The villages in Little Russia are built on well-chosen sites, in the proximity of a fine river, and mostly on the summit of a hill. The houses are scattered over the



A RUSSIAN VILLAGE

FROM A PAINTING BY K. KRIJITSKY

pasture lands, and cattle, ducks, and fowls roam about freely. There are no streets. Church and cemetery invariably stand guard over the town. The giant wings of the windmills, the high well tops, and long-legged storks give the country a novel aspect, and lend a picturesque touch to the golden wheat fields, the vast green steppes, and the long strips of black earth, ready for seed, and the gardens with their exuberance of melons and sunflowers.

The houses or *khati* are built of earth, thatched with fresh straw. They are always clean and white, and stand in the middle of a garden. The windows, especially if there is a young girl in the house, are bright with pinks, roses, and many-coloured poppies. Not a tree is to be seen in the surrounding country, and these flowery villages stand out in the vast steppes like an oasis in the desert. Cleanliness is inborn in the Little Russian, a trait which distinguishes him from the Russians of other provinces. His favourite occupation is agriculture, which is natural, considering that the soil of his country is marvellously fertile, but even in villages situated on the banks of a navigable river abounding in fish, where the peasants might well make a living by fishing, or by the coasting trade, they yet prefer to cultivate the soil. The *tshernoziom*, or black earth, dries quickly and crumbles into a fine dust, which is blown about by the wind and enters at every crack.

It is said that the region composed of black earth, which lies to the south, forms one-third of European Russia. It is almost destitute of forests, and may be termed a steppe. It has been suggested that in primitive days it was wooded, but that the nomads, preferring prairies, destroyed the forests. Some say that the excessive dryness of the climate—rain falls barely twenty-four days in the year—and the want of lakes and rivers,

are the cause of the lack of trees. The steppe abounds, however, in wild strawberries, wormwood, and many kinds of grass.

The Little Russian cultivates his land in the same way as did the ancients in the earliest times. The earth groans under the burden of the heavy ploughs drawn by three or four pair of oxen. Wheat, summer and winter grains, oats, green peas, hemp and flax are cultivated, while the gardens abound in melons, cucumbers, maize, cabbages, and potatoes, and most housewives take care to grow a certain number of tobacco plants, as the Little Russian contracted the habit of smoking many centuries ago. Great fields of beetroot are also cultivated for the purpose of making sugar.

Spring is early in the steppes, and begins in the middle of March. The agriculturists of this country have the praiseworthy habit of helping each other: it is rare to find a peasant who owns the three or four pair of oxen required to work a plough. The men therefore share each others' labour, just as they club together to build a *khata* or to cut and carry wood. No man would think of accepting a wage for work done in common: the owner of the land is merely expected to provide them with a generous allowance of food and drinks.

Kossovitza, or haymaking, begins in the middle of June, and is a time of pleasure-making. The haymaker is a great favourite in the land. When a Little Russian wishes to convey that a man has great strength and energy, he says, "He is a haymaker."

The haymakers leave the farms at night, about the feast of St John, and make their way into the steppe, singing as they go. When they reach their destination they set up a tent and build an oven.

The men rise before dawn, and after a light breakfast set to work under the direction of an overseer, who

spurs on the lazy and shames the dreamer. They break off at ten for dinner, an ample repast, and after a short siesta, continue work till four, when they take some refreshment, after which they start again and continue till sunset.

There is nothing more picturesque than the group formed by the haymakers, sitting round their fire in the moonlight, each one holding his beloved pipe, while another group at some distance perform various characteristic dances with great energy, to the sound of the *balalaika* or *sopelka*.

The encampment is greatly enlivened by the arrival of bands of joyous boys and girls to rake the hay. From dawn to midnight songs and laughter are heard on all sides, though this gaiety does not interfere with the work. When the harvest is over the peasants of both sexes elect a queen of the harvest, chosen for her beauty and strength. Crowned with a wreath of wheat she is escorted back to the village with songs and dances.

The fields are at a great distance from the farms, and it is no easy matter to carry home the harvest. Night and day a procession of carts follow each other along the roads, groaning under the heavy weight of grain.

Agricultural machines are unknown to the peasantry of Little Russia, although they are frequently used by the rich landowners. The moujik still uses a flail, or the wheat is crushed by a horse turning round in a circle.

In Great Russia the very situation of the villages is a sign that varied peoples have successively come down the great rivers to form settlements. The old towns are invariably surrounded by villages and hamlets, like an aged grandfather amidst his children and grandchildren.

Nothing of the kind is to be found in the plains of the Dnieper, where there are few villages. Most of the old towns stand alone, scattered over the country, built on

picturesque sites. In Little Russia there are no traces of foreign settlements; the whole country speaks to the heart of the Slav peoples, recalling, not a forgotten race, but their own ancestors from the Carpathians, or the Danube.

As far back as the twelfth century the old chronicler Nestor describes the Poliani as an agricultural people, such as we find the natives of that country to-day. No great learning is required to recognize that the Poliani and Little Russians are one and the same people, who have not changed either their mode of life or their physiognomy for, at least, twelve centuries.

The traveller in these regions is struck by the atmosphere of unchangeable peace which reigns among this rustic people. The character of the soil, which has nourished throughout the centuries generations of the same race, is imprinted on the soul of its children, and their songs, customs, and legends all bear the impress of the workers' daily life.

In Great Russia, where marsh land is reclaimed, and forests opened out almost under our eyes, agriculture also plays an important part, but the industries, and commerce above all, are held in honour. The native of Greater Russia is not attached to his land as is the Little Russian, he easily abandons his village even without a hope of returning. To emigrate in search of rivers flowing with milk is his ideal. The Little Russian even now eyes with amazement the merchant who comes from the far North to sell necklaces and gewgaws to the pretty peasant girls of the Dnieper.

The native of Moscow has a frank, mobile, open face, often illumined by a smile, but the son of Kharkoff has brown skin, prominent features, smooth, black hair, and a meditative expression. The Little Russian speaks slowly, measures his words, and does not use *two* words

where *one* would suffice; nevertheless his conversation is full of profound humour. When he is amused, his face is immovable, his eyes alone smile, reflecting his inmost thoughts.

The native of Great Russia speaks volubly, gesticulates freely, and jests for the joy of laughing; the Little Russian, on the contrary, is phlegmatic. A similar contrast is also noticeable in the work of these two types of the Slav people.

The Little Russian is a silent worker, his work absorbs him, and he does not easily change from one trade to another; whereas, the Great Russian lightens his work with song, and likes to have various works at hand. The Little Russian feels awkward when he is taken away from his work in the fields, but the Great Russian is a jack-of-all-trades. He makes a good boatman, fisherman, ploughman, or industrial worker; he can adapt himself to all trades and all latitudes; but natives of Little Russia may live fifteen years in a foreign land without learning the language of the country—and without losing the feeling of strangeness in the country of their adoption.

The Little Russian looks on his brother of Great Russia with a certain amount of suspicion: he is always on the defensive in his presence. "He is an excellent man," he will say, "but he is, nevertheless, a Moscovite." "You may be friends with a Moscovite, but keep a stone in your pocket."

The Great Russian, aware of his strength and historical supremacy, treats the Little Russian as a child, and laughs at his expense. The honesty of the Little Russian is proverbial, and it is only lately that he has adopted the habit of taking with him the key of his *khata*.[1] Thefts are very rare in his land, and if the thief is no longer buried alive with his booty, public opinion holds him up to

[1] For explanation of Russian expressions, see notes in Appendix.

unmerciful scorn. The word thief does not even exist in the language: a thief is called a brigand (*zlodyey*), showing that the Little Russian recognizes no difference between a crime and a fault.

The parish (commune), or *gromada*, differs in Little Russia from the *mir*. The Little Russian is absolute master of his own house, and never allows the parish authorities to interfere in his private affairs. He divides his property among his children during his lifetime. After their parents' death the married sons separate; the bonds of relationship do not predispose the Little Russians to solidarity and mutual devotion; on the contrary, men who are gentle and confiding with their friends, live in a state of perpetual discord with their relatives: family quarrels are very frequent in every rank in the social hierarchy.

This tendency to individualism is so strong that the closest relatives are compelled to separate and see as little as possible of each other, if harmony is to be preserved. The idea of duty is much more developed in the Great Russian than in his brother of the South. Tolstoi and Dostolevski did not find their heroes, ever ready to sacrifice themselves for the public welfare, in the country of Tarrass-Boulba.

The contrast between the poetry of the two peoples is also very great; the songs of Great Russia celebrate strength, courage, daring, and orgy, in fact all the violent passions of the soul, and that is why the Moscovite revels in songs of brigandage. In the songs of the peoples of the Dnieper, on the other hand, nature plays an important part, and they are far more true to life. To them grass, trees, birds, animals, stars, and seasons are living things, holding commune with man, taking part in his joys and sorrows, inspiring him with hope and fear. The song of the *tshoumak* is an example of this.

"The mountains are covered with snow, the valleys are full of water, poppies open in the fields.
The *tshoumaks* return from the Crimea, laden with fish.
The old mother seeks her son, seeks him but cannot find him.
'Come, come, my child, I will wash thy head.'[1]
'Wash thy own head, little mother, or wash my sister's; torrential rains shall wash mine, sharp thorns shall comb my hair, the burning sun shall dry it, and stormy winds shall curl it.'"

Or the song of the newly married bride :—

"O fate, my fate, where hast thou strayed?
Art thou drowned in the sea, or consumed by fire?
If thou art drowned, appear upon the shore; if thou art consumed by fire, my heart can only mourn for thee.
Matchmakers came to my *khata*; they married me to a man whom I do not love.
My mother said: 'My dear daughter, do not return before seven years have passed.'
I could not bear it, and I returned before my time; I transformed myself into a brown linnet, I perched upon a raspberry bush. I began to sing, to warble so plaintively that the bush bent low and carried my voice so far.
My mother came to the door weeping: 'If thou art my daughter, enter the *khata*; if thou art a brown linnet, fly to the forest and warble.'"

The Russian peasant does not build durable stone houses. Here one will never find the solidly built inn, such as one sees in Bohemia. The plan of the Russian peasants' houses is mostly the same. Very rarely does one find stone or brick houses—the timber-work consists of big beams. Well-to-do peasants have a ground floor, but all love to decorate the gable with wood-carving. Inside the house, near the street, is the *isba*, or living-room, not always very clean or comfortable. Wooden benches stand along the walls, also a construction of

[1] In Russia this is an act of friendship.

planks on which the inmates make their beds. In some districts there is a bedstead used by the peasant and his wife. At the entrance there are black pictures of saints whose features are no longer recognizable, ancient heirlooms held in high honour; even in very poor houses a little lamp is kept burning night and day before them. The table utensils are kept in a cupboard, which finishes the furniture of the room, for the Russian peasant knows no chairs. When he comes home in the winter stiff and covered with snow, he takes off his shoes and stretches himself out by the stove. Here it is always comfortable and warm, and, as he has to suffer much from the great cold, he does not willingly go without the warmth of his room. In the very cold weather, cattle are also sometimes brought into the *isba*—the stalls are not built solidly enough to withstand the cold. The walls remain dry because of the great heat. Whenever a fire is lit, the door or a window is opened to let out the smoke, and when that has passed away and the door and window shut a comfortable warmth reigns in the room. The temperature sinks again at night, as there is but little difference between indoors and out. The peasant has to protect himself as well as he can against the cold. He dresses warmly, and does not undress indoors, and covers his house from top to bottom with straw; but in the North, even this does not keep out the enemy. If the *isba* be large, it is not too pleasant there sometimes: for the smell of animals, the preparation of food and the drying of clothes will predominate.

For those unaccustomed to it, it is difficult to breathe in a peasant's hut. It is incomprehensible how people can live in the atmosphere. A small hut about twelve feet square—with a door through which a medium-sized man can only go by stooping—the floor made of earth, the ceiling so low that a tall man cannot stand

upright, tiny windows letting in but little light with much draught and cold — the whole building made of thin wood, insufficiently plugged with oakum. That is the usual peasant's home in Russia! and these poor peasants constitute nine-tenths of the population.

The stove takes up a quarter of the room, that is, the particular Russian stove. It heats the room and cooks the food, it bakes the bread and boils the dirty clothes, and all the members of the family bathe in it in turns, and the old people sleep on it. It is the universal stove which only a people under snow six months out of every year could have invented. And what do they not use to heat it—wood, straw, dung. It consumes everything, even the roof beams, but alas! it hardly warms the half-frozen children.

It is torture to go into a peasant's hut when the stove is being lit. The room is full of smoke, no one can breathe, it is suffocating; the smoke stings the eyes, that is why there are so many blind people in Russia. The real Russian stove has no chimney. The smoke fills the room and tries to escape through the roof, through the thatch, or the holes in the walls—and when the peasant can stand the accumulated smoke no longer, through the open door.

It is true that more chimneys are bring introduced, but the old stoves are preferred on account of the warmth. While the stove is alight the room is warm, but it gets deadly cold when the stove goes out. Frost-like crystals shine in the windows, in the corners of the room, in the slits—in spite of the fuel.

The entire family live in this room, day and night. The old man mends his shoes and the women work the spinning-wheel; the girls and young children sit here; the babe cries in his cradle; a calf, a lamb, a sucking-pig huddle together round the stove—here they are warm, and if left in the outhouses would freeze to death. They

sleep on the benches and on the floor all together, men, women, old men, children, and cattle. One must be accustomed from babyhood to that air.

A vivid description of a peasant's hut (*isba*) is given by Tshekhov in his work " The Moujiks." A hut, consisting of *one* room, is inhabited by a family composed of the old moujik and his wife, two sons and their wives, and eight or ten children. In this miserable room all these beings eat and drink and sleep. Here the women bear children and spin and weave. Here a lamb lies peacefully near a naked boy, and the suckling plays with a pig ; here a cock accompanies with gay trills the bleating of the goat. The gleam of a paraffin-oil lamp, if there be one, lacking a glass shade, sheds its light upon this picture of domestic felicity—patriarchal in its simplicity, but not always in its peacefulness !

In Little Russia the peasants are cleaner—their houses are larger and always divided into two or three rooms. Some of the peasants are so accustomed to the dirt, to the calves in the room, that they look upon it as a great injury if forced to live differently. Little colonies of emigrants have been formed in Siberia, and in one case, in which several families from a Little Russian village had emigrated, they wished to carry on their usual customs and habits, and forbade that cattle should be kept in the house. The other peasants looked upon that as constraint, and preferred to withdraw to another settlement in order to carry out their own arrangements.

The cold corridor (*cholodnije sjenji*) divides the *isba* from the room in which the food and clothing are kept. In the summer it is also used as a living-room, and then the peasants' life is more pleasant than in the winter-room. In some places in summer, the cooking is done in an outside shed, and three families make use of one such shed. Cleanliness is a very strong point with the peasant,

although what we have described seems to point to the contrary. But we must not measure everything with the same stick, and according to our own notions. The northern winter is a very ugly guest, and the peasant has to do his best to protect himself, and it is not the time to have a highly decorated apartment. In the summer the housewife, the *chasjaika*, sees to it that the room is scrupulously clean and tidy. The cellar (very necessary to a peasant) is at the back of the house, near the yard, where the stables, nearly always built of wood, are also situated, and the wind blows through the planks and puddles cover the floor.

The barn does not always stand in the yard, but is sometimes built near the house. Flower gardens, as generally known, do not exist in front of the house. The Russian peasant is practical, and does not see why he should plant flowers which give no return, as no one buys them. In his garden he plants vegetables only; a quick-set hedge divides this garden from his neighbour's, but there is no shrub, no tree to break the monotony of the beds—just, perhaps, a clump of sunflowers in one corner, and they are only suffered because their seeds are looked upon as delicacies. Fruit trees are seldom seen, even where the climate suits them; the peasant is not fond of trees. He looks upon trees as fuel, and gets as much of this as he wants from the woods and forests, and at present there is no occasion to plant further. There are still forests of gigantic trees stretching from the Volga to Archangel and Finland, in which the axe of the wood-cutter has never been heard, and in which the bear and the wild ox reign supreme. If one comes across a village with some trees in it, one may rest assured they have not been planted, but were there before the village was built, and one never finds trees planted by the roadside, which would be most useful in times of deep snow to mark the road

A bath-room is a *sine quâ non* to the Russian, and the old chroniclers and Byzantine and 'Arab authors wrote about it in bygone days; they are indeed but primitive bath-rooms, they really are steam baths. Water is poured on to the hot plates of an oven developing steam, and the bather hastens the perspiration by beating himself with birch sticks. When the blood has become warm and the bather is as red as a lobster, he runs out and throws himself into the snow, and then returns to the bath-room to continue the treatment. Where there are no bath-rooms the peasants make themselves one in a very simple fashion, by crawling into the oven. But nowhere does the peasant neglect his weekly bath, either before Sunday or feast days, and afterward putting on a clean shirt. This is a custom, the same as washing his hands after meals, and dates from times long gone by. I said that there is a certain striving after cleanliness, especially among Little Russians, and it finds expression particularly in the steam bath. Every Saturday the whole family has a bath. Every member awaits his turn, undresses, and creeps into the burning stove, sitting in a bent position. Each takes a pail of water and a bath-broom, closes the opening bolt, and works the whole body with the wet rod until it becomes quite red and begins to perspire. If the heat become insupportable, the bather comes out of the stove and dresses very quickly. It frequently happens that the bather does not leave the heated stove at the right time and therefore a dead body is drawn out by the family.

There are peasants who, when heated, rush straight from the stove in winter, and pour ice-cold water over themselves and hasten back to the stove to warm themselves once more. Soap is not used in washing or bathing, that would be a luxury, and their means do not permit any luxuries.

But the farther one advances to the East the more one finds that the bath is brought to a fine art. In the West one dips the nose into a large basin of water, occasionally jumps into a bath in which the water has not been renewed, and is content with being clean on the surface.

Russians have neither the appearance nor reputation of being clean, but they are so in reality. Their baths are supremely comfortable, and in some towns, notably at Moscow, the central baths are a veritable marvel.

Steam is the main principle of the Russian bath; if the foreigner wants to wash he gives himself into the hands of a moujik, commissioned to get the dirt off him. The two ceremonies take place in small select parties in the private baths, or in public in the public baths. For a private bath one has to pass through three rooms: the first is prettily furnished and carpeted, comfortable divans with fresh linen covers, mirrors, toilet tables, and so on: here you undress. In the second one finds a bath, a shower-bath, a bench with a vent, copper basins and taps: here one washes. In the third there is a brickwork stove, here one steams oneself. The price is anything from a half-rouble to ten roubles.

If the bather wants assistance, a moujik enters respectfully, shuts the door, removes all his garments quickly, and stands naked as on the day of his birth, with the exception perhaps of a scapular or a medal.

This modest youth will undertake to scrub you clean; he makes you lie down on a rush mat upon the bench, and solemnly rubs you up and down with a bunch of birch fibres well soaped. You are not a man in his eyes but an unclean thing which he has promised to cleanse. He turns you about like a bundle of rags, and when he is satisfied that you are quite clean, he tells you to stand up

and throws a number of pails of water over you. When he has done with you, you are as clean as a new pin. To slumber on a divan after the ceremony is a very pleasing sensation. And here let me give a brief description of a Russian bath—frequented by various classes of society.

The public baths are an extraordinary sight. On certain days hundreds of men assemble in the vast apartments to enjoy the luxury of a bath for the modest sum of 2½d.

The first big room presents a disgusting spectacle with its long benches laden with packets of clothes, surmounted by unstarched shirts, its smell, its naked occupants, and glaring lights.

In the second room through the hazy damp atmosphere, two or three hundred naked men are grouped under the hard light of the electric lamps. There is no noise, but the swish of running water, the turning of taps, emptying of pails, an occasional laugh, an indescribable hubbub. It is the most curious and the most hideous spectacle to be seen anywhere. The naked human form may be beautiful when depicted by the brush of a master painter, or carved in stone or marble by a Phidias or a Michael Angelo. It may please our æsthetic taste to imagine Greek goddesses wandering about in glades and groves, surrounded by sylvan scenery, but a mass of sweltering flesh, of perspiring humanity, is offensive to the eye.

The glaring light seeks out every deformity: several hunchbacks in the midst of well-made men make a painful impression. Here is an old man, a living skeleton, so emaciated that one is surprised to see any life in him, were it not for the fine old head with its white beard, recalling to our mind the picture of Job! The popes are distinguished by their long hair and beard, and the effect

is most comical; their untrimmed heads are so characteristic of their profession that our eyes look mechanically for the black or yellowish cassock, and we suppress a laugh to find instead the naked body of a man, very much occupied in washing himself.

In the midst of this sweltering mass of humanity children play about, throwing water at each other, chasing one another in and out of the groups of grumbling bathers. Small infants being scrubbed by their fathers with clumsy cautious efforts, stand with the passive resignation of little wet puppies, and while their fathers are engaged in scrubbing themselves, the little ones remain motionless and serious, like tiny midgets among the robust adults.

Wooden pails of cold or hot water are placed at the disposal of the bathers. Men, clothed in a loin cloth, move about among the benches, offering to scrub one for a small fee.

In the slow life of the Northern peoples, the bath is not an unimportant episode as with us. We take a bath between two appointments, the Russians look upon it as one of the pleasures of their cloistered life. They devote several hours to it, and make up friendly parties as for some place of amusement. Those who like steam, steam themselves several times, repair to the refreshment bar, and then sleep. They come out rested, fresh, clean, and wrapped in furs are borne through the glacial atmosphere in sleighs. The lower classes take a bath every Saturday as far as possible. Soldiers have a weekly bath holiday, and take advantage of this to wash their linen while it is not on their backs. The vapour bath with its violent reaction, and the gentle prostration which follows it, is one of the essential pleasures of Russian life, a recreation, a holiday. For the rich it is a pastime, for the very poor a blessed hour, when they can remove their sordid,

verminous garments to cleanse themselves, to frolic in the hot soft humidity, in the gaiety of a common bathing ground, with the almost childish recklessness which mankind feels when returning to his good, primitive state of nudity.

CHAPTER III

THE INDUSTRIOUS PEASANT AND HIS DAILY LIFE

WE Westerners will scarcely be able to imagine what it takes for a Russian peasant to make certain of daily bread for himself and his family? Oh, it means a whole science! He must have the cunning of a serpent, the skill of a diplomat, the accurate knowledge of his surroundings, customs, and traditions combined, and a thorough acquaintance with the human heart.

His chief care is to arrange for himself and his family, his servants, male and female, if he have any, to get sufficient nourishment to be satisfied enough to be able to work well. At meals the bread is always stale: why? Because stale bread is more economical and goes further. Furthermore the whole year he uses no butter with his oats, but hempseed oil, although the first is always handy and the oil has to be purchased—why, then? Because the peasant would eat double the quantity of oats if he had butter with it.

"They ate their black bread," writes Tshekhov, "with great avidity. The tea had a fishy taste, the sugar was very dirty, and the bread was covered with beetles." The peasant's food consists mostly of *shtohee—i.e.* of hot water in which a cabbage floats in solitary majesty surrounded by a few boiled potatoes. When the moujik discovers a piece of fat in his soup he feels a pleasurable sensation somewhat similar to that of Columbus when he perceived land on the vast ocean. This is the ordinary meal. Milk is kept for the children. Meat is only tasted

on holidays, a chicken on Christmas and Easter. Sometimes there are even no potatoes.[1]

The peasant has fresh meat only on the greatest of feast days, because it is too dear, and he eats the coarsest kind of meat with great avidity; so there is only one way, and that is to keep it away from the peasant table altogether.

He manages his guests just as cunningly at the banquets, on feast days, such as Christmas, Easter, Anniversary of the Consecration of the Church, at weddings, baptisms and name days. He offers his guest a large glass of strong brandy, so that he may become drunk at once.

"If I give him a glass," he says, "then he is finished, and will neither eat nor drink any more. If I keep on giving him little glasses, he will be able to drink up all the brandy and will want to eat all the time."

He does the same with his cattle; in the autumn he feeds them on too much hay, and in winter they are wretchedly fed on straw. The head of such a man is continually filled with the cares of host: the first thing is to decide on the smallest amount of food required for himself and his family; then he meditates on whence the money is coming to pay the taxes; then can he get a small surplus, or are his hopes again to be dashed to the ground, for always there are unexpected expenses. Every wedding, every baptism causes him great anxiety, for it means spending the smallest amount of money possible. Yes, money is an open wound in the peasant's life. At home he only requires it for salt, brandy, and meat for festivals. From time to time his grown-up daughter must have a *sarafan* made of cheap cotton, or a handkerchief for her head; he gives his children some white

[1] *Cf.* Rappoport, "The Psychology of the Russian Nation," *Monthly Review*, 1905.

bread and *baranki* (small water cracknels without salt). How many years will it be before he can buy an *armjak*, an armless blue cloth jacket, for himself, or a cheap *sarafan* for his wife? These are his only expenses. All the rest goes to pay the taxes. For the sake of these expenses he must deny milk to his family and take it to fatten the calf for the market. He goes thirty or forty versts on foot in the most awful rain or snowstorm, to take hay to the town for a Jew, and has to put up with the Jew's deceptions; and the village usurer keeps him dependent. So it is quite conceivable, that only one thought occupies his mind, that of keeping himself and his family alive. He has grown so accustomed to it, that he cannot imagine life under any other conditions. When he goes with his wagon, he is gloomy and keeps his eyes fixed on the ground; if he sees a horse-shoe on the country road, a little piece of paper or a cigarette end, he picks it up and keeps it; even manure he throws on his *telegga*, to take it home; to-day some and to-morrow some, soon makes a wagon-load. He tries to take care of himself in the town as well as he can, but the noise soon deafens him, for only elegant gentlemen and tradespeople live there; did he commit but the smallest offence against them, the *gordowoi* (policeman) is there to bring him to the police station at once. How can the poor uneducated peasant, not able to read and write, avoid all the snares set especially to catch him? That is why he sells his goods as quickly as possible at an arbitrarily fixed price, feeds his horses as quickly as possible, makes the necessary purchases, and hastens home before nightfall. Here he makes up his accounts, counts his copper coins, smooths his bank notes and examines them, holding them up against the light, and hides his savings in a jar. It seldom happens that the little sum of money realizes his expectations.

These continual deceptions pain him much, and he has to think of other ways of making up his losses. Without resting after his journey on foot, he goes into the yard and sees that all is in order, if the cattle have been fed, or if the sucking-pig is getting fat, if the axle-trees of the wagon have been worn by the friction, if the thatch has rotted, and if the beams on which the whole hut stands will stand a little longer. He takes his axe in hand, hammers and knocks, to make the required repairs. All the time he thinks of collecting the provisions which cost nothing, only then will he think of those for which he will have to pay. The gully which runs through the village, and is dry in summer time, is full in the spring to the brim with foaming water; a careful man takes this opportunity to cast his net and possibly to catch a little fish to salt down. Each pike arouses great joy, and soon all tubs, buckets and barrels are full of salt fish, so that he and his family and the inmates of his house can live on it the whole summer long. If the fish become bad and without taste, so much the better, they will eat less! All the same there is another vessel on the table besides the soup, and that shows a certain amount of comfort. Of such a man, neighbours say, "Oh, he lives well, he has good cabbage soup (*schtschi*) with fish in it!" The peasant gets some advantage out of that; labourers come willingly to him, and neighbours are ready to help him with the field-work for the sake of the food. And in the spring he lays in a stock of salted meat: a cow in the neighbourhood has been sold because there is no food to give her, and her owner is pressed to pay the taxes; three or four householders join together to buy the poor beast for five roubles; truly they get more bones than flesh, and what flesh they do get is dry as straw. Just the same it is a bargain. In this manner the salted meat lasts

out the whole summer. As there are no cellars, the meat is buried in the ground, and is taken up smelling evilly after the summer: that is why it is so much more economical. The peasant naturally eats less of this bad meat than he would eat if it were good, but the main point is gained, to keep up sufficient strength for the work; he is quite indifferent to the means.

He sticks to his work all the summer; even the lazy bad man hardly ever leaves his field; the good man goes to bed very late, and gets up at dawn, and hurries to work. Eternally occupied with the thought of making sure of the daily bread, he cuts the corn of the neighbouring landowner and earns thereby the third part of the reaped corn. His wife, the grown-up children, even the younger ones help him in his hard work and work like convicts.

At the end of August, his own corn will last until Butter-week (the Russian Carnival). The hay is also sufficient to feed the cattle and even to sell, for he fixes all his hopes on the hay. The portion of common land assigned to him is so small that he can only sow very little wheat; he is generally successful with his hay, if he does not mind cutting the grass. Yes, he even goes to the neighbours and gets them to lend a hand, and he works on the holidays as well. As every one knows that he has salt fish and meat, also a little cask of hemp-seed-oil, and a little glass of brandy, they are glad to come. The work goes on quickly and merrily; all sing together; he cuts the first row of hay. Early in the evening they return to the village, and the work generally goes on quicker than if he had hired labour, and the food does not cost so much. These are the few glad moments in the peasant's life, all round him sing and work, and his heart beats happily.

Towards the end of the harvest he is so tired that he

can scarcely accomplish the work; his face has become quite dark under a layer of brown dust; the inhabitants of his house can scarcely move. At last the winter corn is sown, hay and straw brought in from the fields. Harvest begins sometimes in fine weather, but more often accompanied by torrents of rain. Then the work can only go on under cover, near the house, in the kitchen, garden, or in the barn. Everywhere one hears the thresher, the air is full of the smell of ripe fruit and vegetables of all sorts; the peasant watches the growth of the winter corn and worries himself with the thought of what the next harvest may yield. Who can foresee how all will go on to the spring? If next year's harvest be bad, he will have to send his sons to the neighbouring factory and hire himself out by the day to saw wood. Always, always what may happen is present to his mind. In the autumn he collects his provisions for the winter, and the grown-up sons cut wood and undergrowth in the forest, thresh corn, and repair the old worn sledges. In his free moments he occupies himself with some handicraft, cutting wood, or binding casks with hoops and rope, and the women work also for the winter store; cabbage and gherkins are pickled to be devoured as luxuries on feast days; at the loom linen and calico are woven; no one can take a moment's rest; when twilight falls, work begins under the dull light of a petroleum lamp. This is cheaper than pine splinters. The eldest son plaits new shoes of bast or mends old ones, the mother knits woollen stockings and socks, the young women spin. They have supper and go to bed very late, they stay long at work, and get up early in the morning, sometimes even before dawn.

The peasant's hut at night time is like an insupportable sewer; the inhabitants are so numerous that they lie heaped together on the floor, on wood benches, or on

the stove; the little house is full of the exhalations and groanings of the tired anxious men; the "clean" room is not used and is not heated in the winter, to save the wood; it remains an ornamental room for use only on festivals. In the early morning the housewife lights the stove of the one living room, and the acid smoke swallows up the bad air, though piercing the eyes and nose. Through the door always opening and shutting the cold winter air wakes the sleepers, who jump up to wash themselves at a pitcher hanging on a rope. When in two hours' time the dinner is ready, the housewife shuts the stove door carefully and it gets warm and light in the hut. "As warm as in Paradise," they say with contented voices.

CHAPTER IV

PEASANT WOMEN

WORK, and nothing but work, no rest, no recreation, make up the life of the Russian woman. From the moment of her birth her lot is harder than the man's. The whole family rejoices when the newborn child is a boy; but a girl—well, a girl is only a girl, and an unbidden guest. Only her mother's heart feels any joy at her birth. That is the way all over Russia. They have a custom which proves it. When the first-born child is a girl, the friends of the family seize the father the day after the child's birth and throw him down and beat him. That is not symbolical. He is moved to tears and cries with his thrashing, and he may not take it badly, for it is the custom. When the child reaches the age of five years, she is set to watch the younger children, if there are any. A boy looks after the horses, but only when he is eight years old. Girls look upon themselves as nurses, and even the daughters of rich people look after the children of the poor. Often they get bare food and lodging. This happens until the girls are fourteen or fifteen, they are then considered marriageable.

Customs vary in the different villages, and the habit of living together in one room, with a numerous family, induces a simplicity which permits things to be said and done which under other conditions are kept secret, at least from the girls. And it often happens that boys and girls bathe together, which teaches children from their youth up to look upon life naturally, and without false modesty. And the girl meets life with her eyes open.

In those villages where maidenly conduct is absolutely desired in the bride, it is very exceptional to find a girl who has lost her character. But in those villages the married women are not so careful of their honour. Even the husbands do not look upon this as a serious offence. There are villages where the girls boast of the number of their lovers, and where people look with contempt upon the girl who does not understand how to win the hearts of men. And sometimes they are only permitted to marry the men of their own village.

It sometimes happens that girls go to work in parties on the landowner's property about twenty to fifty miles away, and they do not come home for weeks together. They often fall a prey to their employer. A woman receives very poor wages, for example, for twelve to fourteen hours' work, and often very hard work, such as weeding, she is paid twenty copecks. Thirty copecks is the maximum wage. Women sometimes receive a wage of fifteen copecks, and have to keep themselves. They are allowed a little straw, but the unfortunates must find a covered place in which to spread their straw and sleep. Women, girls, and half-grown children are all employed, and this is where the proprietor tries to make something for himself. The younger a girl looks or is, the worse is she paid. It is necessary to see the tears of a fifteen-year-old girl to understand what it means to her when three or five copecks are deducted from her earnings. Capitalism appears here in its most hideous form. Brute force reveals itself without any cover, and slavery is sanctioned.

The money earned by a girl is hers alone. Her family only use her labour on their own plot of land. Her father, even if a drunkard or tyrant, does not touch her savings. Only exceptional hunger can make such a girl give up her money: this custom is stronger than most laws.

Popular songs formerly spoke of marriage as of a misfortune for the girls. This is no longer the case. Now one hears the " I will not " ring loud from the daughter's lips; she is now in a position to make her will felt. The song is no longer a complaint, but a factory song, and it speaks of the fulfilment of her desires. The revolutionary principles have already forced their entrance to villages.

When the girl is married she wears a checked coat instead of a striped one, and a head-dress instead of a handkerchief, and her whole life is suddenly changed. It is almost beyond comprehension how a Russian woman can possibly fulfil all her duties.

Besides field-work, she has the care of feeding the family, all the cleaning and clothing of it. The husband has nothing to do with that. If the work in the summer is hard, in the winter he can do what he likes, but the woman finds no moment's recreation. If there are two or three women in the house, they take the work by turns, but where there is only one, her work is harder than a convict's. She has a piece of ground and sows hemp-seed. She must spin and weave and bleach to clothe the family. She also keeps some sheep at the farm. The wool and skin are used for clothing. What happens if the hemp is burned out or the sheep die? That is her affair. She is worried and goes on spinning while the others sleep, by the evil-smelling lamp light, or if her husband allows her no oil, in the dark by touch; it is everything to her to have enough linen for the family. Any woman buying linen instead of spinning herself, would be an object of ridicule!

No matter if the woman be well or ill, her work must be done. She lies up for two or three days at most when her children are born. Every one is against her then, not only the men, but the women also. Customs are very cruel. Even the friends laugh at the husband

if he be too humane! And a Russian is afraid of being laughed at.

Fires are frequent, and it is not a rare occurrence for everything to be burnt; or if the husband be a drunkard, it sometimes happens that in fury he tears up the linen. All must be done over again: the husband seldom helps. Indeed it is no exaggeration when we say that one of the worst things in Russian peasant life is the low estimation in which women are held.

Women can also go to the meeting of the *mir* when their husbands are absent, but they do not get the same attention, no matter how eloquent they may be.

The peasant expresses himself in no gallant fashion towards women, when he says, "Long hair, and little understanding." There are cases of women representing their family by their energy and cleverness, but on the whole the Russian peasant woman is condemned to an existence which her sisters of any other country would never envy. Not only is she responsible for the housework, but when her husband is occupied with something else, she has to do heavy work in the fields. Things are reversed in Russia, it is the man who goes to market and sells the poultry, eggs, butter, and milk, and the woman keeps the fields in order. In many districts the heaviest field work falls to her share, while the husband wanders leisurely up and down the Moscow streets disposing of his wares, or sits quietly in the market. And the woman is certainly not the beloved companion, but the servant of her husband. And when he won her hand, her charms had less to do with it than the certainty that she was strong and a right good worker. Personal feelings have very little to do with marriage, and often the wife of the head of the family, who has to find a bride for her son and knows no one likely to suit, turns to the professional matchmaker who is to be found in every town

and who will certainly find some one suitable; romance has nothing to do with the case, and Russian literature can show no such charming love-stories as the Czechs.

Everywhere the peasant is conservative; also the Russian peasant has never been brought into contact with anything different, so he cannot compare the position of the Russian woman with her sisters in other countries. The wife of the priest does not occupy any better position than the wife of any ordinary peasant. She has to work in the house and in the fields to supply the wants of her humble home, for the Russian priest does not sleep on a bed of roses.

CHAPTER V

FESTIVALS

IF the Russian moujik, especially the industrious moujik, and the womenfolk are hard workers, they have many holidays and festivals on which they not only repose but also enjoy themselves. Indeed, in no country in the world do the peasants observe so many religious festivals entailing repose from work as do the Russian moujiks, and of all these festivals the Carnival is hailed with the greatest enthusiasm. Old and young, even in the remotest villages, take part in it, and people salute each other with the words, " May you have a gay, an honest, and an abundant Carnival."

In Great Russia, allowing for preparations and sequel, the Carnival lasts a week. The first three days, until Thursday, housewives are busy preparing beer, brandy, and food; the young men, polishing up and decorating carts and harness. Those who do not possess a vehicle exert themselves to the utmost to procure one temporarily; self-respect demands that they shall appear in the village with gaily decked carts and new reins.

Meanwhile, the young girls are busy building up mountains of ice, and polishing the small sleighs used for sliding down the snow-covered hills.

At daybreak on the Thursday, housewives set to work, as it is the day when all eat to satiety. They light their fires quickly, and commence cooking the fish and cakes, and preparing the paste for pancakes, and are busy till mid-day, which is the dinner hour. After dinner, sleighing commences, or some prefer to walk, while sleighs containing

five or six persons follow each other in quick succession along the chief street of the village.

After exhibiting themselves sufficiently in their own village, the moujiks proceed to the next, and so on from village to village until nightfall. They then return home exhausted, their horses covered with sweat and their heads hanging with fatigue. All sit down to table again to devour the remainder of the provisions, leaving none for the morrow.

The same exploits are renewed on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, on which day the carnival closes. On the latter day the peasants harness ten horses to a large cart; on each is mounted a cavalier dressed in rags, his face covered with soot. All are armed with large whips, brooms, or other household implements. In the department of Kazan the horsemen are sometimes disguised as Mullahs or Kalmucks.

The cart, soiled in the same way, and bristling with brooms, is occupied by a drunken man, also dressed in rags and with his face blackened. A cask of beer is placed near him and a large box filled with cake, fish, eggs, and pancakes. He holds in his hand a large glass of brandy, and is supposed to represent the Carnival returning home. He is expected to eat and drink without ceasing. Many peasants who sincerely desire the continuation of the Carnival beseech him to remain with them; but he answers that it is impossible as he is expected at the fair, and continuing on his way is swiftly conducted by the ten horses to the next village. After his departure old people invite one another to their respective houses: "Ah! little brother, come and keep us company; we are going to drink and finish up our provisions; we cannot keep them for Lent, it would be a sin. During Lent I never drink a drop of anything, and I only eat the tail of a radish. Come, then, little brother, come." Great

numbers assemble in the different houses, and the next day, Monday, work seems unattractive, and the peasants suggest to one another that it would be well to continue the Carnival one day longer. From daybreak it becomes a duty for the villagers to finish their casks of beer and brandy. " Just a mouthful to rinse out my mouth."

They go from *isba* to *isba,* and recommence their gastronomic efforts, and by the end of the day they can scarcely stand. Tuesday, drinking begins again but with less enthusiasm and by the evening, being satiated, they definitely bid farewell to the Carnival. Young people take leave of the Carnival earlier than the old. On the Sunday night they assemble in large numbers, each one carrying a sheaf of straw saturated with pitch, which they attach to poles planted along the high road at some distance from the village. They then set fire to the straw, and are as enraptured with the illumination as inhabitants of London and Paris are with their magnificent displays of fireworks.

All rustic feasts in Russia are necessarily accompanied by the *khorovod,* a choir formed of the most beautiful young girls and handsomest youths of the village. The girls are dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, red predominating. The youths are more soberly attired in red blouses, full black trousers, blue jerkin, and a black felt hat decorated with a peacock feather. The *khorovod* forms into a circle, with girls in the middle, and sings without ceasing until night.

The Slavs are distinguished among all nations by their love of music. In the sixth century the Byzantines already called them the lovers of song. Slav travellers carried with them their *guzils,* a kind of string instrument, instead of arms. In our own days the Russian peasant sings the praises of the sun on the feast of St Peter, and chants the glories of the goddess of spring

and the first spring rain. A considerable number of these songs have a mythical ring, and are reminiscent of ancient ceremonies and pagan sacrifices. The most curious of these songs are those called *Avsen*, which the moujiks chant on New Year's Eve. As soon as the stars appear, young girls begin to sing :

"O Avsen ! O Avsen ! a green wavy fir tree grew in the forest, O Avsen, O Avsen.
Some knights passed,—they cut down the fir tree, they made planks of it, they built a bridge and covered it with carpets, O Avsen, O Avsen !
Who shall pass over the bridge ? Avsen shall pass, coming for the New Year."

Students of folklore have not yet discovered the meaning of the word Avsen, but the ceremony is evidently the remains of an ancient agricultural festival, as the peasant children scatter grains of wheat broadcast on this day, in anticipation of the future harvest, and old women piously gather up the grain to sow it in the spring.

At Mouroma the moujiks invade the *isbas* in great numbers, singing : " Avsen, Avsen ! is the master of the house at home ? " And if the answer is, " He has gone out to buy salt, or to marry his son, or to till the ground, or to sell his wheat," the moujiks demand cakes. " Give us cakes, or we will smash doors and windows." Their demand being complied with, they dance and continue their songs.

The songs of the *semik*, which are sung about the seventh week after Easter, are almost plays, and may be considered the starting-point of Russian dramatic art. Young girls and youths go into the forest and open the performance by forming a ring round a birch tree, which they decorate with ribbons. Then they dance round it, singing :

THE KHOROVAD; A TYPICAL RUSSIAN PEASANT DANCE

FROM A PAINTING BY KONSTANTIN E. MAKOVSKY

"The birch is not washed with rain, young girls are coming towards it; jump, dance, beautiful maidens, and you, young men, admire us. You shall not carry off the young girls from the feast; you shall not have them, without their full pleasure, without their father's leave, and their mother's blessing; and when the fiancés have finished their labours."

Another ring is then formed, and a girl and boy turn round in the middle, singing with the chorus:

"Ah! there was a little lime tree growing in a field; under the lime a tent; within the tent a table; at the table a young girl. She was embroidering with gold a *cherinka* (waist-belt). She was decorating with pearls the bridle of a horse."

A young man passed.
Male voices:

"Is not that *cherinka* for me? That bridle for my horse?"

Women's voices:

"The *cherinka* is not for that young man; the bridle is not for his horse."

Suddenly all begin to dance, singing:

"The Tsar is walking through the town, the Tsar seeks his Tsarevna.
Where is my Tsarevna, where is the young princess?
There is the Tsarevna, she is waving a silk handkerchief, she is lighting her way with her gold ring. Doors open wide."

At these words the ring opens, a young man and a girl holding on high a handkerchief which represents a door, under which the Tsarevna passes. The song begins again:

"Close up your ranks, draw near to each other, embrace tenderly, even more tenderly."

Between the verses, singers of both sexes sit round tables and share nuts, sweetmeats, and beer. Before beginning their songs again, they uproot birch saplings, cut off the branches which they twine into crowns, and then return to the village, where the young trees are planted. A new ring is formed, while the young men holding hands pass under the uplifted arms, and the girls singing :

" A youth was walking on the green grass round a large town."

At these words a young man, or more often a girl wearing a man's hat, darts from the ring and walks haughtily round the *khorovod.*

" O Tour (a pagan goddess), the youth, the champion of the town, invites a young girl to come and pit herself against him."

At this invitation, another young girl leaves the ranks, and stands in the middle of the *khorovod.*

" O Did Lado " (another pagan goddess).

The young girl comes forward.

" She has vanquished the valiant youth, she has thrown him on the grass."

At these words the girl knocks off the man's (or the girl's) hat, and pulls his or her hair.

The chorus sings :

" The youth arising hides his face in his hands ; he wipes away his bitter tears. He dares not tell his friends of his misfortune. O Tour, Did Lado."

In many places these crowns are kept until Pentecost ; in others, they are thrown into the river to see if they sink or swim, as a sign whether the thrower will have a long or short life. If any get ahead of the others, it is

a sign of success these are games for brothers and sisters.

Lovers also have their turn; they throw their crowns into the air, and if they meet it is a good sign. The ribbons with which the wreaths are tied, are preserved through life, and serve to decorate the marriage candles.

Christmas, or *Ridsvianni sviatki*, is most strictly kept in Little Russia.

On Christmas Eve the housewife rises early to make all her preparations; she has fresh ribbons to put in her cap (*her otshipka*), her husband's boots and her own to grease, the wax candle to make, and so on. The oven is not required until late, as the family only assemble at night to eat the *koutia*, a kind of wheaten cake, with dry raisins—a sort of plum-pudding—and during the day have no regular meal.

Meanwhile, the moujik, who has undertaken to buy the fish, arrives on the scene.

"Well, wife," he cries, "I've got the fish."

"A pike?"

"A pike."

"God be praised," cries the mother with a joyous glance at her children, who flock round to examine the precious burden.

The moujik goes out again at once; he, too, has his hands full. He has to attend to the cattle, clear away the snow before the *khata*, and see that the sleigh is ready for use. He must also lay in a good stock of wood that the housewife may not run short during the holidays.

His work finished, he goes to an unmarried neighbour who is willing to turn his house into a temporary barber's shop. Some fifteen moujiks presently assemble, and take their turn at being shaved, and having their hair cut. The scene is most grotesque: a piece of scythe

well sharpened serves as razor, and a bucket of water as a looking-glass.

The housewife having prepared the *koutia*, it is solemnly carried on the *pokoutia* to the place of honour reserved for it in the kitchen.

M. Belokopytenko has described, in his "Reminiscences," this ceremony of the *koutia*.

"I must tell you," he says, "that I had no idea of what the ceremony consisted. I had never taken part in it, I never even assisted at it, only one person of the stronger sex being admitted. I only knew one thing, that the *koutia* was carried on the *pokoutia*, and the whole ceremony was surrounded with mystery. Sometimes playmates older than myself would proudly tell me: 'We have already carried the *koutia*, have you not done so yet?'

"But my turn came; I was outside playing with my friends and building little sleighs when my mother called me. I did not recognize her, her usually pale cheeks were bright, her sad eyes radiantly happy. She placed her hand tenderly on my head, and tilting it backwards, looked at me affectionately. 'Come, my Vania, come, you shall carry the *koutia* on the *pokoutia*,' she said, smiling.

"I shuddered with fear and joy and followed my mother to the kitchen in silence, looking round with curious eyes, while my heart beat furiously.

"The fading light straggling through the frosty windows barely lit up the room; the fire was dying down; all work was done. Youths and girls remained outside, arms crossed, looking at me curiously. The cook was sitting on a bench near the oven, her arms crossed; she looked at me proudly. Near her were two pans, one containing *koutia*, the other, syrup.

"Old Menikha, held in the greatest esteem by old and

young, stood in the attitude of a high priestess before the altar, wiping the *pokoutia* with a snowwhite napkin.

" I stood still in the middle of the kitchen, not knowing what to do. ' This way, Vania,' said old Menikha, calling me towards the *pokoutia*, ' cross yourself, and bow three times.'

" I obeyed mechanically.

" ' Now follow me,' putting on her boots and cloak.

" I walked behind her to a haystack, where the old woman looked about for a lump of grass still green. Having made her choice, she cleared a space round it, and told me to pull a large sheaf from the middle of the stack.

" ' Carry this, and follow me,' she said. When we returned to the kitchen, she told me to lay the hay on the *pokoutia*, and then made me lift the *koutia* and syrup on the *pokoutia* alone, place them carefully on the hay, and cover them with two big loaves. I was then sent into the next room to fetch a honeycomb, which she bade me place on the *pokoutia*. She commanded, and I obeyed. In conclusion, she made me cross myself, bow three times, and then told me I might rejoin my companions.

" Followed by smiling glances from my mother and solemn smiles from the young men and girls, I walked out, my head bent, my childish imagination filled with mysterious fancies which I shall never forget.

" The evening of the festival arrived ; two long tables were prepared in the kitchen, one before the *pokoutia*, the other a little farther off. Both were covered with mountains of cakes, glasses, and liquids. The vast room was lit by one candle placed above the table near the *pokoutia*.

" My father, dressed in white, stood before the table facing the candle, surrounded by incense which rose like a cloud of glory from the thurible he swung with his left

hand. We all stood behind him, both the family and servants, in silence.

"My father crossed himself and said solemnly:

"'Lord, protect us; Lord, protect us; Lord, protect us, and thou, Holy Virgin, rejoice.'

"The old man then recited the Our Father, and on saying the words 'Deliver us from evil,' passed the thurible to my mother, and seated himself before the *pokoutia*. All the assistants crossed themselves and took their seats round the table, the family near the *pokoutia*, the servants at the second table.

"My father filled a little glass with his favourite liquor, and broke the silence with the solemn words: 'May my son Ivan be happy, may he keep in good health': tears rolled down his cheeks, at the sight of which every one in the room, from my mother to old Uncle Mina, a man of bronze, burst into tears.

"'May my daughter Galia be happy, may she keep in good health,' continued my father, still weeping, while my mother, sisters, and all the women sobbed noisily.

"'May my servant Petroff be happy, may he keep in good health.' Petroff's sister, overcome by emotion, left the room.

"'The master of the house must then dry his tears, and also, as the head, he must dry the tears of the household.' As though he had just entered the room, and knew nothing of what had passed, my father looked round, and said angrily: 'Who is crying, what need is there to open the floodgates, imbeciles. Stop weeping, stop, I say.'

"The family began to smile through their tears, and Fedorka re-entered, wiping her eyes on her sleeve.

"'Well,' continued my father, when silence reigned once more, 'may all be happy, may the dead reach God's kingdom, and may we be preserved in good health.'

" He drank another little glass, poured libations round him, and dashed the remainder upwards to the ceiling. After the head of the family has drunk, it is the mistress' turn, and so on from the members of the family to the servants, until the youngest baby, and youngest farm girl have at least wet their lips.

" After the ceremony is finished, all fall to, beginning on the cakes made with poppy seeds, or green peas rolled in honey, then cakes made with roasted chestnuts, and so on until the *borshtsh* or soup made with fish and oil is brought in, after which comes pike, which appears in various shapes and forms, and without which Christmas would be incomplete.

" The principal dish is of course the *koutia*, or the Russian plum-pudding.

" Very little is drunk at the Christmas dinner, and boisterous gaiety is avoided, for the great charm of the festival lies in its atmosphere of peaceful joy.

" The little Russian becomes more gentle and subdued than ever during the Christmas season, and his smile is the sign of the peace reigning round him.

" The first member of the family who sneezes during the Christmas dinner receives, according to ancient custom, a present of a calf or sheep, consequently mischievous children provide themselves with pepper, but their father, who is used to these tricks, presents the sneezer with the family cat."

For the festivals the peasant succeeds in keeping himself clean. Himself steamed in the stove, and his blouse cleaned with ashes, he goes clean to the church, as clean as he possibly can be.

In the church the various national costumes of the women can be seen. Nowhere, except in the East, is such a variety of colours possible. Red is predominant. " Very red " (*pre-krasni*) is said in Russian instead of

"very beautiful." A very red man means a very fine man.

A red blouse with green sleeves, a blue apron tied round the waist with yellow ribbons, a jacket without sleeves, and a head-dress embroidered in gold and silver—that is the Russian woman's festal dress.

The head-dress varies according to position, age, and place. Sometimes one sees a large, round, flat hat like a German soldier's cap, sometimes a French *képi*, sometimes a stick is carried on the shoulder and a low, broad-brimmed hat is fastened to it, with wide and narrow ribbons. Then many rows of glass beads of infinite variety, colour, and size finish the national dress, which is unfortunately rapidly disappearing. Silk and wool are being replaced by cotton, gold and silver by cheap gimcrack ornaments, and the cosmopolitan dress of the city is replacing the national dress. The villages are getting greyer and more uniformly alike.

In spite of his religion, however, the Russian even to-day still clings to heathen customs. Into the place of the old heathen gods have stepped saints of the Orthodox Church, but the customs have remained the same, although the people do not know their real meaning. A thousand years of Christianity have not sufficed to blot out the last traces of heathendom and many superstitions occupy the heads of the peasants. They still believe in the House-spirit (*Domowoi*), the Wood-spirit (*Wjeschi*), the Water-man (*Wodnoi*), and the wood-nymphs (*russaeki*), formerly smaller gods; but the majority of country festivals are rooted in heathendom, even those in the Calendar of the Greek Church.

The most celebrated feasts are those which fall in the springtime. Nature has awakened from her long sleep, and the time of rest is over. As the heathen slaves formerly resorted to the grove to offer to the gods of the

earth and to beg their blessings on the seed-time, the present country people have feasts and celebrate the returning spring. The principal feast of this kind falls on the seventh Thursday after Easter and takes its name *Semik* from Semy, meaning the seventh. This is the feast of the village girls. They go to the woods, pick branches of birch, decorate them with wreaths and ribbons and drag them singing through the villages. In some districts they bend the branches to make frames, and through these frames they kiss each other and promise to be friends. This is the feast at which one can read the future! The young girls carry wreaths they have made and throw them into the brook. If the wreath swim quietly on the water, it means that the girl will be married in a year, but if it sink, she will surely not wear the "cap" that year, or if she does, she will soon be a widow. With beating hearts they go to throw their wreaths into the water, and with anxiety they watch them until they have disappeared. In some districts, if the wreath sinks it means that the girl will die in the year. In another district the wreath is not thrown into the water, but hung upon a tree, and the girl often comes to see if her wreath be still hanging. If it is not there, it is a very bad sign; the girl will not marry in the year, or, sometimes, will die. In old times the *Semik* was the feast of a wood-god. It is celebrated at the coming of the first leaves and it is celebrated by those who are most in the wood during the year, namely the girls. While men and women work in the fields the girls pass whole days in the woods, picking berries and mushrooms or making wreaths. The forest and its ruler, the wood-spirit, have quite a meaning for the villager, and the wreaths which they hang on the trees are offerings which at one time their heathen sisters brought to the wood-god. The *Semik* is celebrated throughout Russia even in the extreme north.

Another great festival in Russia is St George's Day, *Jerjew Den*, which is celebrated twice in the year, in spring (April 23) and in autumn (November 26). The cattle are driven out into the meadows on April 23, when sowing begins, and every one prays to St George, the patron of flocks and agriculture.

St George, who lived at the end of the third century, is the patron of herds and flocks and of agriculture in nearly all Christian countries, but in Russia St George's Day is the feast day of the shepherds. Without his consent the wolf cannot steal a lamb, therefore if he take one, assuredly the shepherd must have displeased St George. So the peasants say: "The wolf carries in his teeth what St George has given him."

The customs on this day vary very much. When the priest has sprinkled the herds with holy water, they are driven to pasture with consecrated birch sticks. The shepherd has eggs and milk and prepares a pancake for himself. A procession round the herds is made in some places with the icon. In Olonetz, where the snow lies very deep, the flocks are not taken to pasture on the 23rd, but young people go from house to house with bells, ring them before windows, and make a collection. Young men and girls dance, and the dew on St George's Day gives them power and strength. The stables are sprinkled with holy water and incensed to keep away evil spirits who cannot endure the smell of it. The evil spirits are not idle on St George's Day. In the Ukraine, or Little Russia, the El Dorado of Russian witches, where there are more of them than in any other part of the world, the witches gather the dew in drops, and hang them on the horns of the cattle, who immediately get thin and give no milk.

St George, who in his lifetime had to fight with all

sorts of monsters, is the enemy of all bad spirits. He pursues the devil without ceasing, with thunder and lightning, as soon as he sees him. The devil flees before him and takes a human form, then becomes a four-legged animal or a bird, but rest he finds none until he comes across a man thinking of evil things, and straightway he enters there. That is why one must try to think only of God during a thunderstorm.

Till the sixteenth century in Russia they believed, as is mentioned by Herodotus, that men who die on St George's Day in the autumn, wake up on St George's Day in the spring, and live in the sea. These people were trading, and brought all their goods to one place before their death, and their neighbours can fetch what goods they want during the winter and pay for it in the spring.

One day in Easter Week the pope, or priest, goes from house to house with the icon, stands the picture against the door, and prays; then he is fed and receives a present. The presents are arranged in each village according to precedent; generally he gets about 10 to 15 copecks, some cakes, and bread. There is afterwards a service in the church, when the priest blesses two peasants chosen to begin the work in the fields.

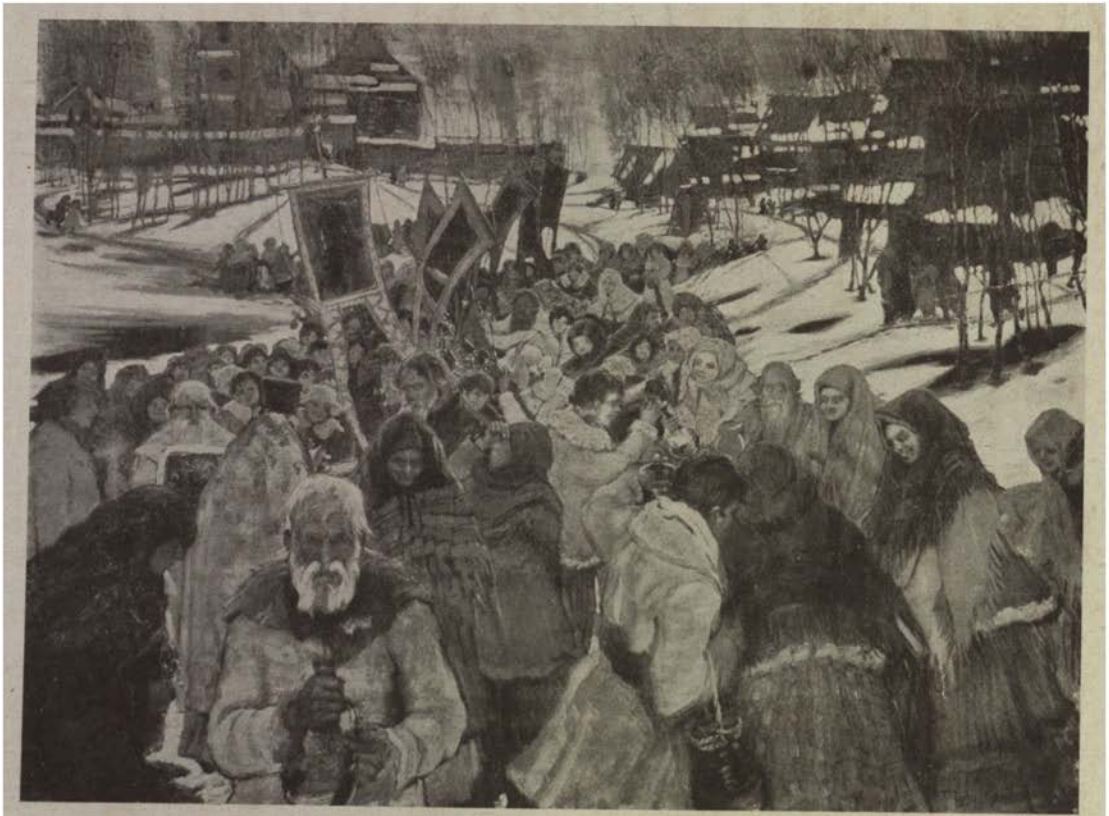
On all days dedicated to the Redeemer, things from the fields are brought to the church to be blessed; there is a procession on August 1st, and all horses are driven up to be sprinkled with holy water. Is there a river in the village, the priest blesses it and the horses are driven into it. Bee-keepers bring the first cells of honey to church to be blessed, and that is why August 1st is called "Honey Day." On the feast of the Transfiguration, August 6th, apples are taken into the church to be blessed, and apples are tasted that day. It is held a sin to eat apples before August 6th.

Christmas here, as everywhere, is the children's feast.

From early morning the mothers are busy baking *bliny*, and the children go from house to house singing Christmas songs, which have been handed down from generation to generation among Slavs, and are called *Koleda*. When the songs are finished they are rewarded with *bliny*, and go on their way. The priest goes from house to house, and is given *bliny* and a small present.

But the great day in Russia is Easter Day. Every village in which there is a church has its icon: miraculous picture. The quiet village street is not recognizable. The market is visited by people coming from afar and sellers of cakes, gingerbread, apples, nuts, and gherkins have come and set out their wares; some sell from the carts on which they have brought their goods. The day begins with service and a sermon. Then every one hurries home, where the table is already laid. The cooking began the previous day, for to-day they expect guests and everything must be ready, and supplies must be plentiful and nothing must be found wanting. A can of beer is at one end of the table, a bottle of vodka at the other, but at first the guests are very shy until the master, who is dining at a little table, and who is attending to them also, invites them to drink; that is why the master so soon gets so drunk that he can no longer occupy his place, but then the reserve of the guests has also disappeared, and they drink uninvited. The feast lasts for three days. Each day brings new guests, otherwise it goes on in the same way. The young people play and dance in their best clothes for dancing is as inseparable from the feast as drunkenness. The girls love crude colours, particularly red, so the young men appear in red shirts, plush trousers, long blue-and-black cloth coat, and a peacock's feather waves from their cap. They remain there until sunset, and sing songs one after the other.

The *Maslenitza*, or Butter Week, is the gayest of feasts;



BLESSING THE WATER

FROM A PAINTING BY HUK-KRAVCHENKO

it takes place before Easter. All the peasants try to get strong after the long fast. The festival lasts a week, one meal is taken after another, and people go here and there, and everywhere food is on the table. An ice-hill is made in the village; the young people play games and act. Masked figures run through the village, and are treated as their costumes find favour or not in the sight of the lookers-on. On the last day of the feast Prince Carnival says good-bye. Ten horses, harnessed in single file, draw an especially high cart; a drunken man with a pitcher of beer and bottle of wine, sits on it holding a huge goblet in one hand. In front of him is a table covered with food which he seems to enjoy; in spite of entreaties to remain a little longer he leaves the village and hospitality is at an end. The young men burn the *Maslenitza*. Great bundles of straw and barrels rubbed with tar are set on fire, and there is a display of primitive fireworks.

Fasting begins at midnight, and oil takes the place of butter.

The Butter Week is not kept so noisily in the town as in the country, but even the townspeople will not let themselves be robbed of this pleasure. The *Maslenitza* is the universal feast. Who can count the names by which it is called? It is the Niece of the Semik, the Spring feast, the Honour-week the "happy," the "broad-week," the sister of thirty brothers and the grandchild of forty grandmothers, the daughter of three mothers, a "paper body" with a "sugar mouth," and so on. Each day of the Butter Week has its own name. The Welcome (*Wstrjetsha*) is Monday; Tuesday is called "Play Day" (*Saigry skhi*); Wednesday, "Sweet month" (*Lakomka*); Thursday, the Broad (*Shiroky*); Friday "the Stepmother"; Saturday, the "Sister in-law's company" (*Solowkinnz hossidjelke*); Sunday, "Farewell Day" (*Proshtshalny den*). All these days point to the fact that the Butter Week is

a festival of great happiness after the long weary days of winter, when they catch the first glimpse of coming spring. There is no reading of the future in Butter Week; the Russian wishes purely to amuse himself. In St Petersburg the festival has been cut down to its narrowest limits in order not to interfere with the work of a great city, but the noise is just as great. The Admiralty Square was set apart for the people a few years ago. Booths stood everywhere, but these have already been ordered elsewhere, to the Field of Mars near the summer garden which, because of its extent, is better fitted for the people's pleasure.

The Field of Mars is changed into a city of booths. Shows of all sorts, swings, panoramas, giants and giantesses, animals, and so on, and the criers who stand in the galleries describe their shows in even more varied language. The panorama of the burning of Paris has wandered to the banks of the Neva in its long pilgrimage, and the crier says, "Here you see the city of Paris burning; who wishes can be burnt at the same time. Come in, come in, the fire is at its height just now!" And while he is recovering his breath, a voice calls from somewhere else, "The great General Skobeleff stands in the thickest of the battle; around him lie mountains of slain, among whom our soldier-heroes. A cannon ball takes off a head, two feet, two hands—but what does our hero mind, he smokes on!"

So it goes on, one trying to outdo the other. When the harmless fun no longer draws, the language gets stronger and stronger, and the public like it. The *Stariki* (Elders) are favourite figures, as they invite the public to enter the tilting-ring. Year in year out the same funny speeches are used but the students and moujiks find them always new. If the old man loses the thread of what he is saying, he points to one of his best listeners and says, "That

red-beard was the cause." The audience laugh and move away, and the *starik* begins his story again.

A *starik*, in Butter Week, does not earn more than fifteen roubles, and that with crying himself hoarse. The dancers, perhaps, make 50 during the week, most of the others from 5 to 10 only. The *starik* is an attraction, and entices people to enter the shows; but no pleasure costs more than a few copecks. Swings and switchbacks are the great attraction. The man of the people loves a swing, he can swing himself for hours together without tiring of the motion. The ice mountains are arranged with a wooden staircase leading to the summit, about 50 feet, and there the journey begins. Moujiks stand at the foot of the staircase and offer their services and a little sledge; the passenger sits behind the moujik, then the man in charge at the top gives the sledge a push and down it rushes along the smooth surface. The habitués do not require the moujik, who steers the sledge and prevents it from running into others. Many a red beard can guide his lady, amid cries of pleasure, to the finish, where tea or vodka is hurriedly swallowed, and the whole affair begins over again.

The air makes them want food, so they go to the booth where food is sold, and buy *bliny* and cream cakes made of butter and flour, and nuts which every one old and young cracks with glee. The day has to be finished with drink. It would not be according to tradition if it did not finish in that way. The Russian pays for his sobriety in this manner. The man of the people in Russia does not go every evening to the public-house like his English, French, or German brothers do, only on Sundays does he go to the *kabak*, but then he must be noisy. This is an old, old custom, dating from the time of Ivan Wassilevitsh III., in whose reign the *kabaks* were opened only on Sundays, so there was no opportunity to get drink during the week.

The custom of making guests drink too much is not to be rooted out of the Russian character, and the apostle of temperance will never get a hearing as long as the Russian thinks he cannot celebrate any feast without drink. Many drunkards go back home reeling from the Field of Mars at the conclusion of the Butter Week. When the drink goes to his head, the Russian gets uncommonly merry, he sings and kisses everybody who comes in his way, calling him endearing names like *goloobtshik* ; he goes with half-a-dozen just like himself, arms round each other's necks, singing and swinging along until the spirit of alcohol at last brings the noisy company to silence.

In Finland the monotony of life is only disturbed by two feasts—the Harvest and St John's Day. Even at the Harvest Festival the excitement is little compared to what goes on in other parts of the country. The Finn can bear a great deal without complaining, as his history shows ; he is a silent man, and sad as the land he inhabits. The harvest is not often a cause of rejoicing in Finland. Here are no wagons laden with corn. On the hill slopes, where the seed is sheltered from the spring frosts, is a piece of land which the Finn has acquired, by burning the forest, and the stalks grow up between charred clumps of trees and jutting rocks. No one who did not understand would dream of calling it a cornfield. In the early days the crops were very bad, and from year to year the ears grew fewer, until it became not worth while to dress the land, and a new piece of forest was burnt down to start a new field of corn. The harvest is cut with sickles ; all the village turns out, and when the work is done, singing and dancing after the feast. Old and young dance to the notes of a violin by candle-light. The young man who wants to dance, looks at the girls and beckons one to join him. When he is tired, the partner is left standing, for in Finland they do not make compliments. Woman is

the equal of man, and enjoys, more than in any other country except perhaps some of the United States, equal rights. But one cannot have both equal rights, political emancipation, and all the little compliments paid by chivalrous man to submissive woman. *Sapienti sat.* Drink is served, brandy to the men, and to the women so-called coffee but it is made entirely of chicory, and the colour is indefinite.

St John's Day is more gaily kept. The previous day is called the black day, and the evening is spent in superstitious practices. Little flames proclaim where treasure is hidden, but only that man can see these flames who is on the roof of a house which has been moved three times. This is the reason why so many of the smaller buildings are moved. Great care must be taken not to swear when digging for treasure, for nothing offends the powers of the underworld as much as swearing. Once upon a time a man had dug up part of a treasure; it was getting very heavy, so he swore just a little oath, then the treasure disappeared and was never seen again. Great fires are made, and casks smeared with tar are lit and sent rolling down the hills, and all the people come along singing down the hills behind them. They keep awake all night, and tell stories and sing and dance and play. The next day is also a feast day, and sometimes the house is made clean and the table laid and the family go out of doors, so that the *domowoi* (house spirit) may be unhindered in his movements. Strangers are recommended to go to the clergy house on these occasions, especially in villages, because every one is out making merry.

CHAPTER VI

SUPERSTITIONS

UNFORTUNATELY these graceful customs have not survived alone, the moujik has also inherited barbarous superstitions which he would do well to get rid of. The belief in unlucky days, when it would be a sin to work, is deep-rooted and a serious obstacle to business. The work in the fields is regulated by saints' days; the moujik consults the almanac and not the climate or the soil, either for sowing, reaping, or mowing the grass or hay.

A belief in witchcraft is no less strong in him. Sometimes the role of wizard is played by an intelligent and cunning old man, but more often the game is in the hands of wicked, silent, old women. The moujik treats these people with the deepest respect, but inwardly hates and fears them. Frequent cases of alleged bewitchment give rise to savage scenes.

The moujik believes firmly in the *znakhar* (he who knows all), and will consult him in preference to a doctor, although he is a vulgar charlatan, who cures with charms, spells, and incantations. He even invites his credulous clients to whisper their trouble to the river, who will carry it away without betraying their confidence.

It times of epidemic, such as of cholera or typhoid fever, the widows and young girls of a village, after a secret conference, assemble late at night at the far end of the village dressed only in chemise and waistbelt and with hair hanging loose. They take with them a plough.

The idea is to plough the earth round the village to prevent infection.

The procession is opened by a young girl bearing an icon, surmounted by a candle ; she is followed by another harnessed to a plough, which other women push behind to help her. A third girl follows, cracking a whip without ceasing—this is to drive away the epidemic, personated by the devil.

All are armed with pokers, brooms, and sticks. They chant prayers in loud tones, and lower their voices in passing an *isba*, so as not to be heard. Woe to the curious who would assist at this spectacle ; if he is discovered he runs the risk of being torn to pieces. Usually the widows and girls preserve the profoundest secrecy as to the hour and day of the procession.

The last epidemic of cholera in Great Russia and the famine which followed, gave rise to the following legend, which is not lacking in poetry and shows the simplicity and creative imagination of the moujik.

According to Russian peasants the drought and famine in 1891 were the work of a witch.

During that year this daughter of the devil mounted on a bow was seen to descend on the village, and pluck five feathers from the tail of every cock. That is why during the summers of 1891 and 1892 the cries of these interesting fowls were heard nightly.

Cocks perched on a harrow were the only ones to escape this ordeal, as the teeth of this instrument form a cross and the witch dared not approach.

The witch made the feathers into a big broom, and flying furiously through the skies, swept away all the clouds and prevented rain from falling.

One day, however, feeling her last hour approach, she desired to humiliate herself before God, and ask pardon for the evil she had done mankind. After her confession

the church shook to its foundations and the priest said, " No, I cannot absolve you, you are not worthy to receive the Blessed Sacrament."

The witch therefore died without absolution, and her body was dragged with iron hooks and thrown into a cesspool.

After her death rain again began to fall, but it was too late.

Although there is no further reason to fear cholera and famine since the witch is dead, yet the moujik is not reasssured; he is persuaded that Russians will soon have to fight against some foreign sovereign who by means of his agents spreads the cholera throughout Russia.

The idea that an abundant year is followed by a bloody war is imprinted in the moujik's mind, as shown in the legend of the three cocks.

One night, in the district of Novosilsk, the sacristan, making his rounds when cocks were crowing in the village, heard another cock crow in the church itself; the crowing was repeated three times in the night. The sacristan was surprised to see a cock in church, but attached no importance to it. The next day as the same thing happened, he ran to the pope and laid the matter before him; they both returned to the church and were witnesses of the apparition.

Next day the pope assembled the faithful and related the adventure, and said, " Which of you, my sons, would be willing to pass a night in the church, to learn the meaning of this extraordinary crowing? "

After a long pause a young boy of the village consented to do so.

He was shut up that very night in the sacred building, where he sat down to read the Gospels. All went well until the cocks began to crow in the village. The door of the sanctuary then opened and a white cock appeared on

the altar, crowed, and disappeared again into the sanctuary. The next time the village cocks crowed a scarlet cock came out in the same way, and on the third occasion a black cock appeared and crowed. After this a monk dressed in black came up to the child and inquired whether he had understood the cocks' prediction.

" No, I understood nothing," said the child.

" Listen, I will explain. The white cock signifies that next year the harvest will be more abundant than it has ever been before ; the scarlet cock predicts a bloody war ; and the black cock stands for death, coffins, and tombs in such numbers that none will remain to eat bread."

Thus, in our own time the Russian believes in legends which would rejoice the heart of a poet, and provide a plot for a Wagnerian opera.

Animals play a prominent part in the omens dear to the Great Russians. Swallows and pigeons are great favourites ; the moujik, like most peasants of all nations, is persuaded that God blesses the roof where swallows build their nests, and the house where the largest number of pigeons take refuge.

The crow, on the contrary, is hated ; his cry is a bad omen, and if he perches on the cross of the church to croak, there will be a death in the village without fail. The first song of the nightingale is the surest sign that the time has come to plough ; but if he sings while the trees are still bare, it is a sign of a bad harvest. If the larks are long in returning, hens will lay well.

The moujiks put the flowers they have worn during the mass on Whit-Sunday in their mills. Mice regulate the tariff for wheat. If they begin their ravages on the stores by the top, bread will be dear all the year ; if they begin at the bottom, it will be cheap, and if in the middle, it will be middling.

The people of Little Russia, too, just as those of Great

Russia, believe firmly in legends, in good and bad genii, in fairy tales full of grace and charm.

The house fairies, *domovoi*, live in the *khata*; no harm must be done them, and as twilight falls it is wiser not to mention them. When an evil *domovoi* takes a dislike to some member of the family he makes his life a burden, he wanders about the attics at night, wakes up the children, or seizes people by the throat.

The *domovoi* is hairy, enjoys appearing in human form, and especially in the guise of a sweep. When the *domovoi* is good, if he loves the master of the house and his children, he is invaluable; he feeds and takes care of the horses, protects the daughter of the house and finds suitors for her, and sees that the head of the family makes plenty of money.

The legend of the *roussalki* is one of the most poetical. The *roussalki* are beautiful water-nymphs, who appear by moonlight in rivers, lakes, and streams. They walk about naked, decked with crowns of leaves and flowers, or sit on the grass and comb their long tresses, chanting the while in chorus.

They hide behind trees and wait for the young girls who come at dawn to fill their pitchers at the streams. Woe betide the peasant girl who has forgotten to provide herself with the flower of the wormwood as a shield from their wickedness.

"Have you wormwood or parsley?" cries the *roussalka* as the girl appears.

If she replies that she carries wormwood the *roussalka* runs away, but if she has the misfortune to answer parsley, the *roussalka* tickles her until death supervenes.

Some believe that the *roussalki* live at the bottom of rivers, in nests made of straw and feathers stolen from the village; but others say that their aquatic palaces contain treasures of silver, gold, and pearls, and that the

rivers that shelter them pour cascades of emeralds on to their palaces of crystal.

The *roussalki* are wonderfully beautiful; their long tresses fall below the knee; they are sylph-like in form, and though pale their pallor does not detract from the exquisite charm of their features. At Whitsuntide the *roussalki* adjourn to the forest and indulge in the maddest frolics; they swing on the branches, sing, dance, and roll about in the long grass. When the festival is over they come to the banks of the river to do penance.

The *roussalki* are neither fairies nor witches, but the souls of little children who have died unbaptized. Many a Little Russian will tell you how he has heard the *roussalki* singing, "My mother brought me into the world, but she forgot to baptize me." A good Christian should answer, "I baptize you, Ivan and Mary, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost . . . " The child soul then ascends to heaven.

But if seven years pass before the prayer of a dead child is heard, the soul is changed into a *roussalka*. The drowned are also changed into *roussalki*, and may be distinguished by their long green hair, continuously streaming with water.

Any peasant of the Dnieper who has bathed near the mill, will tell you how he has seen the *roussalki* sitting on the wheels, and plunging into the water with laughing cries of "Cuckoo-cuckoo."

Then there is the *vedma* (witch), who has a long tail, wears a chemise touching the ground, and her hair hanging loose.

The *vedmi* amuse themselves by milking the cows until they draw blood; they change themselves into cats and sparrows, or appear in various fantastic forms. On the eve of St John they hold a rendezvous; they leave the

khati by the chimneys, and ride through the air on broomsticks to take part in their Sabbath.

The moujik of Little Russia is no doubt unacquainted with Darwin, yet he firmly believes that bears were formerly savage hermits, who offered hospitality to none and would know no one. They lived in the forests. One night a monk came to their huts and went from one to the other asking shelter, but not one would open to him. He laid his curse on them, and they were changed into bears. Even to this day the native of Little Russia believes that the man in the moon is none other than Cain.

Swallows are held in great affection. No one in Little Russia would destroy their nests; they have won the gratitude of man by carrying away the nails which the Jews were about to use in the Crucifixion of Christ.

Anyone finding the bright red flower of the fern which opens at midnight of the 23rd of June, will obtain the gift of clairvoyance; no treasure will be hid from him.

There are two kinds of treasure: one is accursed, the other harmless. The place where the accursed is hidden may be easily distinguished by the flame which burns over it. Treasures sometimes take the form of an old man, a dog, or a cock. You have but to push the old man, or kick the dog, and they crumble away into bars of gold. The question is how may they be recognized. The safest way is to provide oneself with the fern flower. To procure this, one must go alone into the forest at night, which needs courage, as the *vedmi* and *roussalki* are in waiting and will surround the adventurer, uttering wild cries, hurling trees on the top of him, and though the sky is clear, lightning will flash and the thunder roll. Few there are who go in search of the fern flower.

This belief in wizards and witches is very far spread over Russia; they are supposed to be capable of bewitching the cattle as well as men, with the help of the evil

being, and to bring all illnesses upon them, so the peasants, looking upon the witches as the cause of all illnesses, naturally turn to them to heal them and their cattle. All epileptic attacks are said to be due to the agency of the devil. Any one suffering from cramp is said to be possessed by the Evil Spirit, and the peasant makes the sign of the cross over him, and people "possessed" are often found in the villages and are mostly women. Imbeciles are also frequent, and the people look upon them with superstition. The *Ourodjiwy*, as such are called, are gifted with second sight, and their wandering speech is accepted as prophecy.

And the belief that one can search the future runs like a red thread through the life of the Russian peasant. The girls (at the *Semik*), who ask what fate has in store for them by throwing their wreaths into the stream, go on throughout the year asking similar questions. New Year's Eve is one of the best nights to seek to know the future. If a pig has been slaughtered during the holidays, the tail is carefully kept, and on New Year's Eve every one has a small piece of it. Then they sit round in a circle, put the piece of pig-tail on a sharp piece of wood, and stick it in the floor in front of them. Then the dog is allowed to come into the room, and the person whose piece is first devoured by the dog will be married in the course of the year. Girls also try to know the future in the following way. Four dishes are placed on the table. A piece of coal is placed on the first, a piece of wood on the second, ashes on the third, and a ring on the fourth; the girls choose blindfolded, and the future will be according to the object they draw. The coal means mourning and sorrow; the wood, an old man; ash, approaching death; the ring, marriage and joy. The girls also go to the cross-roads to read their future. They take a cow skin, a loaf of bread and a table-cloth, and usually some old woman

who is reported to have had experience in these matters goes with them. At the cross-roads the girls spread out the cow-skin, lay the bread upon it, then sit round it, covering their faces with the table-cloth. The old woman draws a circle round them with the bread-knife, and all listen intently for the slightest sound. One hears perhaps the bells of some returning cart, and concludes that she will soon be married, for bells mean a wedding.

St Cosmo and St Damian are saints whose feast, November 1, is celebrated by women. The girls save up the whole year for the visits of their friends. A cock and a hen are killed in every house as an offering to the saints of the day, and these are procured in the spring. When the hens are sitting, the mother goes from house to house, and after saying a prayer, she asks for a little cock and a little hen. Thereupon she gets two eggs, which she takes without saying thank you, and goes away; when she has got so many eggs that she cannot carry them in her clothes, she goes home. In the evening, after sunset, she sits with the eggs in a cap on her lap, and prays to the two saints, and swears to have a cock and hen killed for their feast if real good chickens come out of the eggs. Thereupon the eggs are placed under a broody hen.

Most superstitions in Russia, as perhaps all over the world, are found among the women. Men laugh about them and make fun of them if they take money to a "witch" or a "wizard" (*snakhar*) to ask advice. The housewife, however, can hardly do anything without this advice; if something disappears, is stolen, or lost, she goes to the *snakhar*, so that for a fee he may tell her who is the thief, but he, as is the fashion of oracles, never gives a clear answer, but rather in a Pythian manner. "Your knife has been stolen by somebody, in whom you have an enemy!" The *snakhar* of Christian Russia evidently imitates his prototypes and confrères of ancient

pagan Hellas. When illness breaks out, there is much superstition. Instead of going to some doctor the *snakhar* is sent for, and only when his spells have had no success, and the invalid is worse, do they hasten to the doctor, and then it is generally too late.

Though the men laugh at the women yet they are not free from superstition themselves, *tout comme chez nous*. For nothing in the world would a peasant work in the fields during Easter Week! For it is well known that wheat sown at Easter will not germinate. Then again, cabbages to be any good must be planted on Maundy Thursday. On certain days the peasant will break the ice to bathe because bathing on those days keeps you healthy all the year round. And then again at Epiphany, when the cross is dipped into the water, they undress and throw themselves in, and then hurry home with a cask of water and warm themselves at the stove. The "Jordan" water must be taken care of and is a remedy against all illnesses, and if placed in the fields keeps away hailstorms. At the first sound of thunder every one bathes, and he who will not go to the river or the stream at least washes at home. Pouring water from a milk-pail in which there is an egg, through a wedding-ring, signifies that he who washes remains healthy, and the cow gives much milk, and the hens lay many eggs. Peas are sown in those fields which lie near the road, so that passers-by may pick the young pods if they please, for God pays those a thousand-fold who help the poor wanderer.

CHAPTER VII

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

WE must not forget the feasts which are part and parcel, as it were, of each man's life. The wedding feast for example. The marriage agent arranges a day on which the bride's mother can receive the *swat* (bridegroom) and his people. They come on the appointed day and pray the mother to show them the bride, who enters the *isba* dressed in her best, bows herself humbly before her future parents-in-law, and retires. This visit is called *gladjanky* (the sight of the bride). Then the bridegroom's parents invite the bride and her people to look at their farm (*podvorja smoträt*), when the rooms and farm buildings are shown to her, so that she can see if she is coming to a well-managed house. Much is often borrowed from the neighbours to make it seem better than it really is. The bridegroom's father then brings the bride's family salt, bread, and vodka. All the friends of the bride enter the *isba*, candles are lighted, then a prayer is said, and the dowry is arranged. A return visit is made, and the matter is settled. After the exchange of bread, nothing can be altered; anyone doing this runs the risk of misfortune all his life!

In some districts the bridegroom gives the bride money, about seven roubles. In others the parents shake hands, and a cake is broken into two pieces to signify that in the marriage unity must exist and each must bear his share of the burden!

The bride weeps and wails and asks her parents what she has done to be sent away from home; this dates from

the time when the bride was taken by force, against her will.

On the wedding-day the bridegroom comes with his parents and relations and guests to the village. The inhabitants not invited wait for them at the entrance to the village, and stretch a rope across the road and receive a present of money, from three to ten roubles, from the bridegroom's father, for opening the road. Then the bridegroom gives the young men and women money for tea, and the boys and girls get money to buy cakes. If the present be too small in the eyes of the receivers, all sorts of tricks are played, and they unscrew the wheels of the carriage. In the district of Jaroslav, and some others also, two tables are made ready, the " sweet table " and the " betrothal table." The " sweet table " is reserved for the relatives, and the bride and bridegroom do not sit there. And later on when the proper meal begins at the betrothal table, the bride and bridegroom remain spectators. Bread and knives, spoons and forks, are put in their places, but tradition demands that they let all food pass by them, neither do they drink. They are treated with great honour. At the head of the table is a bench covered with white on which money is placed as a sign that they may never want money. The godfather of the bride leads them to the seat of honour and invites them to take it. On the table stands a wooden candlestick called *krasotii* (beauty) with candles, decorated with ribbons and coloured paper. Then comes the presentation of gifts, and the bridegroom is kissed three times by the bride for every present ! Then the meal begins. If the bride's parents are poor, the bridegroom gives them some roubles for the food. In some districts this is done in any case, the sum sometimes reaching fifty roubles. The young people sing appropriate songs while the meal continues, and one of the

singers approaches one of the guests at the end of each song, holding a plate in which the guest places a coin. When the meal is over tea is handed to the bride and bridegroom, which is taken in another room if there is one. At the end of the first day's feast, the bride parts with her future relations in tears, which the bridegroom dries with a small present.

The next day all the relations go to the church. The *swacha* (marriage agent) is also there. It is her duty to place unnoticed a wooden spoon at their feet when the priest is leading them round the pulpit. If the bridal pair tread on this, they free themselves from all sickness and evil. The ceremony finished, all return to the bride's house and vodka is handed to them. The bride and bridegroom sit side by side on a bench, a cloth is held between them so that they cannot see each other, and behind this improvised wall the bride's women plait her hair and put on the proper head-dress. The toilet ended, a looking-glass is brought, and the bride and bridegroom must look at themselves at the same time.

Then the carriages or sledges are mounted, and they go as quickly as horses can carry them to their new home. If the bridegroom is a favourite in his village, they are received with pistol shots, and the houses are decorated with evergreens; a triumphal arch is erected and decorated with flags, and the young men accompany the wedding procession. The bridegroom's father and mother are waiting at the door with bread and salt, and the icon for the newly married people. They bow before the icon, kiss the parents, and receive a present of a piece of cloth and a rouble. The bride's godfather leads the bridal pair to the table, and they sit down. All those present approach and drink a glass to the health of the newly married, kiss them, and place a piece of money on a plate. After each kiss the fiancés kiss each other three times. Then they

are conducted to another room, where the meal is prepared, which they partake of, while the wedding guests remain in the first room and eat there. There is then a pause of several hours, and the guests either go into the fresh air or sleep off their drink. Then they come to tea, and the bride and bridegroom fall to with a right good will. The table at which this meal takes place is called the "Prince's table," because the bridegroom takes the chief seat. The wedding celebration finishes with the tea, but there is still another small celebration the next day. To put the young bride to the test, all sorts of tricks are tried on her. They stop her way, she seizes the broom and sweeps a clear passage to the table. The relatives throw small coins on the floor, these she deftly picks up and hides. They hinder her carrying wood; she places it on the bench by the door. The bridegroom is held responsible for her want of skill, and is punished at once and in the street for it. A bench is carried in front of the house, the marriage agent (*swacha*) is laid upon it, and well beaten with belts and sticks. Then the bridegroom comes between them, and begs pardon for the guilty one, whom he ransoms with glasses of vodka. The guests return to the house, take their leave, and go home.

In some districts it is the custom for the bride, the day before the wedding, to go to church to assist at a *molebna* (thanksgiving), or if she be an orphan then at a *panichida*, a Mass for the souls of her deceased parents. After the Mass, she throws herself at the priest's feet, asking his blessing, and then visits the cemetery where her parents lie buried. A woman, generally the godmother, accompanies her and consoles her; she really does not require consoling because as soon as the visit is over she is as gay as possible and full of joy at the coming wedding.

Life in the country offers many changes of enjoyment and pleasure. All work stops for the holidays, of which

there are too many. A whole week's idleness, as the "Butter Week," is not any inducement to the lazy man to work. And the Russian clings to tradition, and any attempt to curtail his holidays will draw forth all his obstinate resistance.

The yearly *Trifua* (celebration of the dead), which takes place at the cemeteries, also dating from heathen times, has not been driven out by Christianity. To eat and drink on the graves of ancestors—to drink without moderation—is a very unpleasant custom. It would seem a veritable desecration to many of us. But in Russia no one is offended if the peace of the graveyard on this day is disturbed by the noise of orgies, and in the evening one sees people who are no longer capable of walking home stretched out on the damp grass.

Puschkin says that "Habit is a despot," and a greater despot in Russia than anywhere else.

As for the peasants of Great Russia, their marriage ceremonies, as most of their customs, still show evident traces of ancient times. The only concession to the spirit of modern emancipation which the moujik has made is in allowing the young man to express his preference in choosing a bride. As to the girl, she is compelled even in our times to submit blindly to her parents, disguising even the suspicion that it might be possible for her to have formed an opinion in so delicate a matter.

When the moujik has decided that the time has come for his son to marry, and if the latter has shown no preference for any particular lady, his father allows him to choose a bride from among a certain number of peasant girls selected by his parents. When the choice is made, the father and mother depute a professional matchmaker, or more often an aged aunt, to wait upon the parents of the suggested bride to treat with them, for marriage is

not only an *affair de cœur* but a matter of business with the Russian peasant.

The aged relative decks herself in her best clothes and goes to the *isba* of the lady. In asking the girl's hand in marriage she employs allegorical terms, which are nevertheless quite clear to the initiated.

Thus in addressing the girl's mother she will say: "No snow had fallen, and no footsteps could be traced, yet snow has fallen, and we may trace footsteps in the direction of the affianced bride!"

Or: "A white dove escaped from our house, has it not come to you?" When the girl's parents disapprove of the marriage they reply:

"We have not seen your dove, we do not know what has become of it, we have not got it."

If the proposal is pleasing to them, their answer is encouraging, and the matchmaker asks the plain question:

"Do you wish to be related to such or such a person?" The mother replies:

"The relationship does not displease us."

In some departments, amongst others that of Nijni-Novgorod, allegorical terms have disappeared and the matchmaker asks bluntly:

"Is your daughter in the market?"

The reply is no less clear—she is, or she is not.

After the departure of the matchmaker, the girl's parents confer with one another and then hold a family council; after these formalities the prospective bride is informed of the proposal, and whether her bridegroom pleases her or not, it is a time-honoured tradition that the proposal should be greeted with tears. But there are tears and tears!

If he displeases her, her cries, sobs, and protestations become so overwhelming that her parents are for the most part moved to compassion and break off the negotiations.

For some time past it has become very rare to force a marriage upon a girl.

In some departments the girl's mother, and sometimes the bride herself and the girl friends, pay a visit to the future husband's house. They scrupulously examine the *isba*, inquire what amount of wheat is stored in the granary and carefully inspect the stove. The kitchen utensils, shovels, and pokers are decorated with ribbon in their honour.

Sometimes, especially in the department of Pskov, when the future husband is poor he does not scruple to disguise his poverty and unblushingly shows his prospective mother-in-law provisions which do not belong to him, and even cattle and an *isba* which are the property of a comrade.

It is then the fiancé's turn to visit his future bride with his parents. The girl comes to the door to meet them, but never crosses the threshold.

"Does your fiancée please you?" demand the bystanders.

"She pleases me," replies the young man, "but I cannot say whether I please her."

If the girl makes no reply her silence is taken for consent, and the visitors enter.

The young man then makes a sign, and her spinning-wheel is brought to the girl.

"Come, my affianced bride," he says, "let us see whether you spin well."

The girl sets her wheel going, and after a few turns, upon a sign from the young man, the matchmaker says:

"Very good, now walk about and let us see whether you are lame or not."

She walks about the room, and then going up to the young man, says:

" Will you do me the pleasure of walking round the room to let me see whether you walk straight ? "

When the fiancé has complied with the request the young couple are placed side by side to see whether they are well matched, and all present exclaim :

" What a handsome couple."

Meanwhile the parents proceed to bargain, marriage among the Russian peasantry being a commercial matter.

" Well," says the girl's father to the young man's father, " are we going to settle ? "

" I am ready, if you are willing."

" How much do you put down ? "

" Fifteen roubles."

" So little. I was given twenty for my eldest girl, and times were harder."

" Well, we will throw in a cloak."

" Get along with your cloak, I have one. We will not consent."

The amount of the purchase money varies, according to the prospective father-in-law's fortune, from twenty-five to one hundred roubles. The fiancée has her dowry of linen, bed clothes, clothes, and the necessary implements for a woman's work, such as a spinning-wheel, rakes, and pitch-forks, not forgetting thimble, needles, and thread.

That she should possess a sufficient quantity of these articles is indispensable, unless she wishes to be immediately involved in disputes with her husband's family, as his mother and sisters will not make her a present even of a towel or a duster.

When the sale has been arranged, prayers are said, and the girl's parents clap their hands, having previously enveloped them in their cloaks, which is a happy omen, meaning that the couple shall never lack clothing.

Long before the celebration of the marriage the fiancée retires into solitude, renounces all youthful games and

songs, goes no more to gay parties, or if she appears for a short time, it is merely to weep and move them to compassionate her unfortunate lot.

It is obvious that these customs date from the earliest ages. The Russian peasant has preserved, in all their natural freshness, the primitive traditions of Aryan antiquity which have been sung by the poet Catullus.

In these songs, as in the Latin poet's verses, we find expressed the wail of the affianced girl, who anticipates with terror the moment when, separated from her beloved parents, she will be delivered to a stranger, as a captive to an enemy.

For this reason, in Great Russia, from the day of the betrothal, the girl friends of the fiancée assemble at her house nightly and seem to desire to protect her from the ravisher. They work at the trousseau, chanting the while in doleful strains, which the prospective bride accompanies with silent tears or noisy sobs. Her companions endeavour to calm her. Among the Russian Jews on the eve of the wedding the bride sits down in the middle of the room, crying bitterly, whilst the relatives and guests make merry.

The fiancée usually begins by complaining of her parents.

"Oh! my dear father, you have allowed yourself to be seduced by wine, by sweet words, by honours. Oh! beloved mother, you have let yourself be seduced by the glass, by honeyed words, by honours."

Her friends console her, or unite in lamentations, painting dark pictures of conjugal life: a drunken husband whip in hand, the bad father-in-law, the mother-in-law wicked as a serpent, the sisters-in-law infinitely capricious. This is the same act of the conjugal drama which the poet Catullus depicts in verses 31-75 of his sixty-first poem. And there is considerable analogy with the second nuptial chant of the poet when the friends, whom he calls the

integræ virginis assemble for the last time at the fiancée's house to deliver her to the *novus maritus*.

On the marriage day, in the department of Tambov, the bride arises first and goes to awaken her companions, chanting :—

" Arise, my companions ; arise, my dear ones ; dawn is breaking, my enemies approach."

At Rybinsk it is customary for the young girls to weep for their virginal beauty, which is represented by a small fir tree, decorated like a Christmas-tree with ribbons, flowers, and candles. The fiancée places the tree on the table and begins to weep, saying :

" I have but a short time to remain beautiful, to live among young girls ; I will carry you, my virginal beauty, to the dark forest ; I will hang you to a white birch ; in the spring my friends will come and cut down the birch tree, and will let my virginal beauty fall on the silky grass, and then my father and brothers will mow the grass and cut my virginal beauty."

In several departments the custom of preventing the bridegroom from entering the house of the bride has been preserved, and he is compelled to pay a fine to the villagers before he can cross the threshold.

In escorting the bride to church, it is customary to hang certain articles to her as an omen of the prosperity which should await her in her new life. In some places a piece of bread is put in her bodice, that she may never lack bread, in others wool is hung on her skirt, that the sheep may multiply, or flax, that linen may be abundant.

The bridegroom precedes the bride as the nuptial cortège wends its way to the church, and both salute all passers-by as a safeguard against the evil eye.

Immediately after the cortège has left the house, the fiancé lets the bride pass him, and gives her three little strokes with a whip on the shoulders, saying :

" Renounce the will of your father ; learn to forgo the tenderness of your mother ; forget your virginal beauty ; learn to submit to your husband's claims."

In the church there is a race between the young people to step the first on the silk carpet placed before the altar, as the first to arrive will dominate the other. The two candles are carefully watched to see which burns the quickest, to learn which partner will live the longest.

After the nuptial blessing, and sometimes before the couple leave the church, the bride's hair is dressed after the fashion of married women, plaited in two tresses, and caught up under the *povoinik*.

The entrance of the new home is draped with white, an emblem of a calm, peaceful life. Sometimes a closed padlock is placed on the threshold, showing that the bond between the two will be so strong that nothing shall break it. A female relative of the bride then comes out of the house, wearing a fur cloak inside out ; she is hiding her face, and brandishing a poker, addresses the bride with incomprehensible and formidable threats ; this is a representation of a mother-in-law.

The wedding breakfast is lavish ; often a wizard is invited, and is the most favoured of the guests, his duty being to ward off ill-luck. The bridal couple do not partake of the meal, but each time their health is drunk they are expected to embrace.

The bridal bed is prepared in the barn and sometimes in the stable. The couple are escorted to it with great pomp. In the department of Vologda a couple chosen among those renowned for their harmonious lives, are asked to lie in the bed to warm it, in order that their virtues may be communicated to the new bride and bridegroom.

The Russian peasant woman is still the slave of her husband. In the department of Jaroslav the wedding

breakfast is terminated by a brutal ceremony intended to inculcate the idea of the woman's slavery into the bride. A guest takes in one hand a piece of roasted kidney, and in the other a glass of brandy, then he calls his wife and commands her to show how submissive she is ; the woman is compelled to throw herself on her knees and do whatsoever he demands. Sometimes grovelling on her stomach to represent a fish swimming, sometimes jumping about like a dancing bear, according to her husband's orders. This continues until the man has finished eating the kidney and drinking the vodka, for it is pleasing to him to prolong his wife's humiliation.

All the guests go through this revolting performance, until the bride's turn comes; she is compelled to follow the matrons' example.

Happily, these moujiks who have been to St Petersburg or Moscow renounce this barbarous custom on returning to their province, and no doubt it will speedily disappear altogether.

The marriage feasts generally last some weeks, and often the family remains in debt for long after.

In some departments, to save this expense, or for other reasons, the marriage is accomplished, as in the earliest times, by the abduction of the bride. In Olonetz the young man having come to an understanding with his bride, begs a handkerchief or waistbelt as a sign of good faith, and arranges the day, hour, and place of the abduction.

If the young girl goes to a party, her fiancé and two of his friends seize her as she is about to enter her home, and bear her away in a sleigh. The neighbours, perceiving the abduction, demand a fine of brandy, or threaten to rescue the girl.

Sometimes these scenes involve serious risks. If the ravisher is caught by the girl's parents they adopt the

cruel revenge of tying him up outside the door, and leaving him exposed during the night to thirty degrees of frost.

Custom exacts that after the abduction the new couple should come to solicit pardon of the parents. They remain kneeling before the door until they are invited to enter. Sometimes they bring a pope with them in order that their prayer may be more speedily granted.

In a village of Nijni-Novgorod, the daughter of a rich peasant was abducted by a penniless youth. The following Saturday, according to the accepted custom, the young couple came and knelt before the *isba* of the girl's parents. But the father was inexorable, though after a quarter of an hour the mother was touched and pleaded for her daughter. Every Saturday for some weeks the newly married couple came to kneel under the father's window, without succeeding in awakening his pity.

During the Carnival, however, he was touched, and opening the window, called out :

" I pardon you, but not altogether, as I will never let you cross my threshold."

Her father's inflexibility was a mortal blow to the girl, a beautiful healthy peasant ; during Lent she lost her health and freshness, grew thinner and thinner and died of a decline.

In the departments of Jaroslav, Nijni-Novgorod, and Vladimir, the newly married couples of the year are expected to come to the capital during the Carnival, and to remain in the principal street for three or four hours, exposed to the curious glances of the passers-by. They are called " pillars," and are expected to attire themselves in their best and gayest clothes.

If the husband has two cloaks he must wear one, and carry the other on his arm. The bride puts on her best dresses, one on the top of the other, her softest *sarafans*, and various gaily coloured fichus on her head. The

RUSSIAN PEASANT-GIRL

FROM A PAINTING BY FEDOR SICHKAFF

Russian peasant woman's notion of full dress is somewhat different from that of her more cultured sisters—full dress in society meaning as little dress as possible. As to the poor, they hire the cast-off finery of the rich, in order to play the part of a "pillar" decently attired.

The passers-by assail the "pillars" with questions—"Do you love your wife?"—"Do you love your husband?"—"Are you a happy couple?" The "pillars" are then expected to embrace as a sign of the harmony existing between them.

Those who look sulky, showing that peace has deserted the hearth, are pestered with jokes, bombarded with snowballs, and even pommelled.

CHAPTER VIII

FAMILY LIFE

IT is rare that a newly married couple have a home to themselves, the majority live with the husband's family, and are compelled to submit to the absolute authority of the head of the family, or *bolshak*, which means the great, the powerful one.

Although patriarchal families, numbering sixty members, are becoming more and more rare in most Russian villages, families of thirty or forty members may still be found.

The position of *bolshak* is usually hereditary, but he is sometimes elected by all the members of the family. As he is answerable to the parish for the taxes, the authorities can intervene and replace an incompetent chief by some more energetic and intelligent member of the family. It sometimes happens that a son is nominated *bolshak*, and his father is subject to his authority.

A woman can only be appointed *bolshak* in default of any male who has come to the age of reason.

The *bolshak* assigns to each member his work, sending some as day-labourers out of the village, and others to the town as workmen, and they are compelled to give their wages to him. In a word his power is unrestricted, but he may not sell the house he lives in, or go to live elsewhere without the family consent.

The *bolshak's* wife superintends the work of the female part of the community; often she devotes herself entirely to the kitchen and leaves the hard work to the daughters-in-law.

A short time ago the *bolshak's* power was truly frightening: no one dared to speak in his presence, people trembled before him, and at table no one thought of eating or drinking until he gave permission. In spite of the abuse which unlimited authority engenders, harmony reigns in large families where the grandfather is *bolshak*; having no private interests outside the community, his feelings are the same for all the members of the family. It is by no means so when the *bolshak* is an uncle, or one of the brothers; it is difficult for him to be impartial and not to favour his own wife and children.

The position of the women is the hardest, and especially that of the daughters-in-law, who have to bear with their husbands, their mothers-in-law, their brothers-in-law, and above all with their sisters-in-law.

The moujiks do not allow a woman to complain of her husband, considering that such recriminations are more humiliating for her than for him. When the husband complains of his wife, both husband and wife are punished, the wife because she has disobeyed her husband, the man because he has failed to make himself obeyed.

Nevertheless, as a mother the woman's part is widely extended and greatly honoured in Great Russia. The Russians acknowledge that she has superior rights over the children than the father, and ordains that greater respect shall be shown her.

"Fear your father, but respect and love your mother," says the Russian proverb.

If a father has reason to complain of his son and cannot master him, and appeals to the authorities they will not give him satisfaction unless the son is unmarried; but if a widow complains of a disrespectful son, there is no excuse for him, married or unmarried: even though he be grey-haired he cannot escape punishment.

The Russian people firmly believe in the power of a mother's blessing and a mother's curse.

" The earth rejects children who have been cursed by their mother," they say ; " but a mother's blessing can save you from the depths of the sea."

The young peasant girl has but one way to rise from the abject position assigned to her in the Russian family, that is, to attract the attention of the *bolshak*, or better still of her father-in-law, and to win their good graces. Considerable evils thus result among the Great Russian communities, which are known under the generic term of *snokhatshestvo, snokha* meaning daughter-in-law.

The following anecdote may be quoted as an example.

In a village in the department of Voronyzeh, the moujiks bought a bell, but when the moment came to suspend it the united efforts of all the peasants of the district were powerless to raise it. The pope, supposing that the bell was made heavy by the weight of the sins of the men who were attempting to raise it, ordered all those who had an excessive tenderness for their daughters-in-law to retire. To the general stupefaction, half the assistants let go of the ropes.

It is noteworthy that in spite of the morally humiliating position of the Russian peasant woman, she has important rights as to property, which are very superior to those of the moujiks. Whereas the latter has only the right to his clothes and has to give his wages to the community, the woman's property is her own, which property is called *sobina*. Flax and wool are the exclusive property of the women, who divide it among themselves and spin it. All the money earned by the sale of their work is their own. They have also the right to their hens and sheep, and can sell them at their pleasure. Daughters-in-law have their garden in the orchard, and can sell the produce for their own benefit. And lastly, a woman's dowry

may not be touched either by her husband or the family.

It is extremely improbable that this partiarchal system will exist much longer. While the family was engaged exclusively in agriculture, the produce of their land was their only anxiety ; the produce was for the common use, the work was communal, the produce was communal. Now the members of a family are scattered : some have migrated to the towns to earn money. Nicolas goes to St Petersburg in winter to earn money as a coachman. Alexis is engaged as a wood-cutter. The coachman has sent one hundred roubles to the *bolshak* as his wages for the five months, whereas the wood-cutter has earned but twenty-five. The coachman then begins to ask himself why his brother, and above all his elder brother who drinks just by himself twenty-four cups of tea during the day, should have the right to consume tea and sugar bought with his wages.

As soon as the words " thine " and " mine " are imported into the patriarchal community, then the system is ended. The members of the family become mutually burdensome, they feel that a new element has crept in, in the division of tea, sugar, and bread ; it becomes a question of the stomach. Nearly every quarrel amongst brothers begins with the furious question, " Have you looked into my stomach ? " Which is met with the answer, " The stomach does not recognize mine from thine."

M. Ouspenski, who has observed various families in the process of disintegration, says :

" These discussions of mine and thine, which I have remarked arise with every drop or morsel swallowed, prevented me from accepting invitations to tea. My hosts guzzled without stopping: the combined family absorbs nine hundred cups of tea daily. Without a word each one keeps his eye on the saucers of the others, forcing

himself to drink the same amount as his neighbour, and watching that no one takes more than himself. So it seemed to me. In any case, evil glances passed from one to the other, and one could feel the general tension. When I employed one of the brothers, the other immediately inquired how much I would give him, and if I paid one of them, the other opened covetous, curious eyes and fixed them on his brother's hands and purse. It goes without saying that such a strained position will not last long; and families are breaking up more and more."

The life of the Russian peasant, which has an irresistible attraction for the great Tolstoi, is intimately linked with the land, and his happiness depends on her; as soon as he turns his back on the soil, fertilized from generation to generation, by the labour of his ancestors, vice lays hold of him.

M. Ouspenski sadly bears witness to this in noting the deterioration of the moujik's family, during the time of transition, when the primitive peasant tends to become a farmer, that is, if he does not desert the land for the factory.

"The mystery of the power of the soil," says M. Ouspenski, "is displayed in this fact, that the great mass of the Russian people remain strong in their misfortunes, young of heart, heroic, and at the same time modest, but only while the power of the soil holds them, while it is impossible for them to turn a deaf ear to the commands of the earth, while she dominates their mind, their conscience, in fact while she is their whole existence."

Drag the moujik from the soil, the duties imposed by it, and the interest it has created, let him forget his position of peasant, and it's farewell to the good-nature of the people, farewell to the unity of the people, farewell to the charm of the people.

The moujik has with force and simplicity expressed this power of the soil in one of the oldest of Russian *chansons de gestes*, that of Sviatogor the hero.

Sviatogor rode through the fields on his horse. He had set out without a definite plan, not like the other knights to levy tributes but merely to take a ride, to stretch his limbs, and if possible to pit himself against some other knight.

But he met no one but a simple moujik carrying a sack on his back. Sviatogor galloped forward, but in spite of all his efforts the moujik always led the way.

" Stop, man," cried the hero in a voice of thunder, " I cannot come up with you, though my horse is famed for his swiftness."

The man stopped and placed his sack on the ground. The hero, approaching, attempted to raise it with his stick, but the sack seemed glued to the earth and did not move. Stooping, Sviatogor attempted to raise it with his hands, but the sack resisted all his efforts. The hero, dismounting, grasped the sack in both hands, and dragged it so violently that blood burst from the veins of his face; meanwhile the sack remained immovable, whilst he sunk knee-deep into the ground.

" Man," he cried in stentorian tones, " speak the truth, what have you in this sack ? "

" The earth within it draws you to her."

" And you, who are you ? "

" I am the moujik, the beloved of mother earth."

This story, continues M. Ouspenski, of the hero unable to move the sack, which the man of the people carries so easily that the hero mounted on a swift horse cannot come up with him, is a powerful picture of their respective positions with regard to the soil.

The peasant is a slave of the green grass ; all his movements, actions, and ideas are connected with the soil and

in this dependence lies the secret of his peaceful life, and the sense of his words to the hero, "I am the beloved of mother earth."

The earth loves him, and in dominating him absolutely, gives him, in exchange for his servitude, security from responsibility.

His conscience is at peace, provided he act according to the inspiration of the earth. He kills the thief who has stolen his horse, and does not consider himself guilty, because without a horse he cannot work his land. He ill-treats his wife until death supervenes,—again he does not feel guilty, she was lazy, she did not grasp country life, she was an obstacle to work, and the soil requires unceasing labour.

Feeling no responsibility, the peasant improves nothing; he lives by obeying the soil, and this continued obedience is manifested by incessant labour, which constitutes the whole of his life, and seems to bring no result because his life itself is the result.

What motive has the oak for growing? What profit does it derive from the juice of the earth which it absorbs for centuries? What interest has it in covering itself with leaves—scattering acorns to feed the pigs?

It grows, puts forth its leaves, and scatters its acorns without knowing why; its interest in life is life itself. So is it with the peasant, his life is a continual labour: to live and work, work and live.

The Russian need of communal living is seen in the country dwellings. The villages, generally straggling along on both sides of the road, consist of houses built closely together; the yards and gardens are not divided by hedges and walls. The German also tries to have his house and garden and yard, and it is difficult to bring them under one roof: this has been noticed all the ages from Tacitus down.

The *Muscovite School* has used this difference between the Russian character and that of the people of Western Europe, to lay stress on their system, and no one can deny that they have used it well. It is with pride that the Russian says that thousands are not dying of starvation in his country, for the peasant who goes to the cities as tradesman or handworker to try his luck finds, if it is necessary, a firm support in his own village community. Is this not the answer to the riddle which the best brains have for centuries been trying to answer ?

Certainly the poor Russian peasant is supposed to be the Messiah of the poor and wretched, for the principles on which the construction of his communities rests shall spread over the world and soon become the model for the New Order which knows no Egoism and none without possessions, just as now no Russian is absolutely without possessions.

Russia was created to reform the world on religious grounds. Russia, the State of peasants, was compared with Ilja Muromez, one of the most popular heroes of Russian saga. He lay for thirty-three years on the stove-bench, his mind occupied all the time with one great thought. When the moment for action came he stood up, and the earth quaked under his feet. Thus Russia has been inactive for hundreds of years, and has been preparing for great deeds, and now the moment has come to gather her strength together.

The Achilles heel of the whole system was that the peasant would take no interest in the improvement of his land, or in enhancing its value, if it were taken from him at the next partition and given to another, and he would not reap the fruit of his labours. But there was also an answer to that. The earth of Russia is so fertile that it can go on for hundreds of years without fertilizing, and can assure the people rich food, yet all the time the

peasants have gone on cultivating and improving their land, and following the example of former masters. Now as formerly the Russian peasant only cultivates corn and vegetables, as his grandfather did, and he cultivates the land in their way.

We cannot say that the peasant does not try to improve his land—on the contrary—but he desires to improve it *not* by rural economy. He knows that the improved land can be taken from him any moment and given to another, either by his master or the community. But what he earns by trade and industry, that is his, and on one will take it from him. Even in the time of serfdom the master could not lay hands on the cattle, farm implements, or the household goods of the peasant. That is why the peasant does anything rather than cultivate the land. He erects a grocer's shop, in which he can sell brandy, rope, nails, shoes, and such things, or he will drive a droshky in the winter, but not till the land.

The restless mind of the Russian is a great hindrance to the prosperity of the land, particularly since he regained his liberty. The old love of wandering, which he had not been able to indulge, made itself strongly felt. When he heard a report that certain land a long way off was more productive than his, or that the government of some district was giving land gratuitously to settlers he went, family and all, many hundreds of miles, starting by night or in the fog so that he might not be prevented. Everything in the house which was not nailed down was taken with him, but of the outstanding crops and farm produce he took nothing, that belonged to the community and fell back to their possession. He expected to find much better land in his new home.

Sometimes whole villages stood empty. The inhabitants had gone after some will'-o-the-wisp. Often after long wanderings they found how deceived they had

been, for there was no land to be given away; certainly it was fruitful land, but very well populated. What could they do? They had eaten up their stock of provisions on the journey; their cattle, suffering from hardships and fatigue, had to be killed; the wretched horses could scarcely stand and had to drag the wagons full of furniture and utensils; there was no end to the misery. Even to-day there are occasionally cases of the same sort, and the government does its utmost to prevent these mad excursions.

All this prevents the seed sown by Tsar Alexander II. from ripening. The peasant worshipped the Emperor, his liberator, who gave him back dignity of manhood. He prayed for him and lay in the dust before him when he met him, and called down blessings on his head, but he did not use his freedom in the way the Tsar expected he would. The Russian peasant was a nomad until 1593, when the regent, Boris Godunoff, made a decree which bound the peasant to the soil. Before then the peasant had moved about when his home no longer pleased him or satisfied his requirements. Whole districts were left uncultivated and labour was not obtainable, and the landowners therefore were unable to pay their taxes. The princes owning land on the Volga were able to offer tempting promises to the peasants, which naturally smaller landowners were unable to do. And the defence of Russia depended on the small landowners, and it was to assist these small landowners that the peasant was obliged to remain in one place.

The curse of the peasant is drink. Ouspenski has given vivid descriptions of the manner in which the Russian moujik drinks. He drinks systematically, and with him a drinking bout is almost a solemn occasion, requiring the observance of certain rites. He often spends his last copper in drink and sells his hut and his land

and when he has nothing more to sell, he is reduced to beggary. He begs, and spends the coppers he collects in drink.

It often happens that a well-dressed peasant woman in the country, or in a small town, carrying a small child on her arm and leading another by the hand, will address a passer-by asking a gift. Astonished, the person asks:

"Have you no fields?"

"Oh yes, we have fields."

"Are they then barren? Or was the harvest bad?"

"The harvest was not bad, the land is good and fertile."

"Then why do you beg?"

"The master has punished us," runs the answer. "It was in winter, the stream was frozen over. We had no water for extinguishing; the whole village was burnt all but one house, the house of Wassil Ivanowitsch; he must be a good man that God has spared him."

"What are you going to do now?"

"We are going out into the world, wherever God leads us. The men are working at home in the fields, we are collecting money to build a new house, before the winter comes."

"What does a house cost?"

"Thirty to forty roubles."

"Thirty to forty roubles, do you hope to get a sum like that from strangers?"

"All is possible with God, and there are so many good people in the world, who are glad to give of their superfluity to the poor."

These really are unfortunate people, and one is glad to give something to get them out of the misery they could not avoid. The five-copeck pieces are quickly collected by the woman, some even give her a larger piece of money, for the Russian is not cold-blooded enough to look on distress untouched, thus perhaps she gets the

required sum together. But here also there are drones in the hive, and many say they have been burnt out, just to excite pity and to get money. Perhaps in no other country so much cheating and swindling goes on, under the name of *fire*, as in Russia. In the district of Moscow, there is a group of *isbas* called Sachod: the inhabitants thereof live by begging. When autumn comes, they leave their villages and spread like a swarm of locusts over the neighbourhood. The Russian knows these fine brothers of his, but unfortunately his pity is soon roused, and then who distinguishes between "chaff and wheat"? They know how to paint their misery in such colours that they are generally successful in getting money.

They return to their villages in the spring and bring back money, clothes, and provisions. The police have done their best to wean them from this very easy mode of living, and the strongest laws have only resulted in forged passports and documents.

Beggars flourish in other parts also, for some peasants carry on begging as they would a trade; yet they do not do it because of distress and misery, but it has filled a very necessary place in their lives, from time immemorial. These beggars are not poor, they have a house, cattle, and fields, and many a good gold piece, but the love of wandering fills their breasts. The most wretched old rags are fetched out, and away they go, gaily, "into the world." Several pose as blind or dumb, and cripples are not wanting, either real or feigned, and the peasant who is desirous of taking one such, can choose from hundreds; but the blind are the most sought after, for if the leader has a real good old blind man with him, his business flourishes, and the harvest of gold is not far off. Wherever the pair are seen, in villages, bazaars, markets, or fairs, everywhere are good people who give gifts, and the police get no chance

of examining into the case. As a rule, bread is not wanted, and if the beggars cannot get money, they are given linen or corn, which they can change for brandy at an inn. It would take the pen of a Victor Hugo or the brush of a Hogarth to picture the life of a beggar. He who wants to understand the black side of the Russian character must study it in a *kabak*, which can be found everywhere, even in the smallest village. The vice of drink, like a disease, drags on from generation to generation. When the peasant was a serf, and worked in the sweat of his brow, his only recreation was in the *kabak*, at least there he could forget for some little time the miseries and worries of every-day life. And what became a habit in those sad days, still remains a habit—even in his liberty. The great mass of peasants know no other amusement on Sundays except a drinking bout in a *kabak*. Instead of thinking of the morrow the Russian peasant will spend his last copper on drink. It is a well-known fact that in famine-stricken communities the public-houses are full. And when the moujik is asked why he spent his money on drink under such circumstances, he will say: "We have nothing to eat, we are going to die of hunger; let us, therefore, have at least a drop and drink oblivion: it is merrier thus. Let us hunger and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we shall die." But to the honour of the Russian people, be it said, there is an earnest striving against this. And the reform comes from the peasants themselves, and one often sees in the provincial papers that such and such a place has forbidden the sale of intoxicating liquors.

The one bright thing in all his is, that the Russian, be he ever so drunk, never loses his good-humour. As their great poets have always sung in the minor key, so the peasant, when drunk, is not without a certain pathos. He is merry and sheds tears by turns; he embraces who-

ever comes near him, and kisses him; and five or six men have been seen with their arms round each other's necks, reeling here and there. But that is all—he is a noisy guest in the *kabak*, but never quarrelsome. He will only drink and be noisy to his heart's desire. Here where he pays, he is master, and here he was free before the liberation. The *kabak* was dear to him in those days, and custom takes him to-day to the place he held dear in those days.

CHAPTER IX

BESSARABIAN PEASANTS

THREE-FOURTHS of the population of Bessarabia are Moldavians, The Moldavian peasant is lacking in energy and initiative; he is phlegmatic, like the Little Russian, and the only signs of Southern passion in him are his fits of vengeance and vanity. On the whole, however, he is good-natured, compassionate, and ready to share his goods with others. He is, however, idle and careless, which is perhaps due to the fertility of the soil, which yields a maximum of fruit for a minimum of effort; and the sense of insecurity from which he suffered under Turkish domination, and under the numerous Tshinovnik, has some connexion with his apathy.

The type of the Moldavian peasant is similar to that of the peasants of the South, softened by the mixture of Slav blood. He is rather over middle height, brown and brawny, his face is expressive, his features fairly regular; he has black eyes, and heavy eyebrows and moustache; his movements are slow and awkward, his walk heavy. He leaves chest and throat always uncovered. The majority shave their beards, but wear their hair long, and falling over their shoulders.

The women are lithe; their hair is black and thick, but their features are irregular. The forehead is low, the nose pointed, and the cheek-bones rather prominent; complexion sunburnt, eyes black, sparkling, and full of fire. The grace of their movements, now slow, now rapid, makes them very seductive. Like all southern women, the Moldavian ages prematurely, and at thirty has lost

all her freshness and beauty. Though very modest and docile with her husband, she is by no means amiable with other members of his family, which is the reason that the peasant of Bessarabia starts a separate establishment as soon as he is married, as in Little Russia, even though his worldly prospects suffer.

The Moldavian's *cassa* or house is made of a mixture of clay, straw, and horse dung. When he has decided to build a new house, the peasant invites all his relations to a solemn feast; some of the guests dance the national dance, *djogue*, to the strains of soft music, while the others begin to build the house. A bench, jutting out from the wall, runs round the *cassa*. The exterior of the latter is carefully plastered, and the roof thatched with straw or rushes.

Only well-to-do people have the luxury of a chimney through the roof, others are content with an opening in the ceiling over the hearth.

It would be difficult to find any peasants as scrupulously clean as the Moldavians; everything in their homes is polished and shining, and there are no untidy corners to be seen.

The altar in the corner of the room facing the east, is decorated with real or artificial flowers and hung with silk or cotton draperies. Candles and a blessed loaf are placed on a tablet under the images; and round the altar, sheafs of wheat from the last harvest are arranged in the form of a cross.

The beam running across the room is hung with apples and little yellow gourds in the form of a star and in the season, with bunches of grapes. Boxes of sweet-smelling blue-bells fill one corner of the room; the young girls dry these flowers and crush them to a powder to sprinkle on their dresses, when they are going to a *djogue* or a marriage.

A large soft divan runs along one side of the wall. In

well-to-do houses it is covered with costly rugs and with hand-made covers; in more humble dwellings, cushions of red or green stuffs filled with hay form the back of the divan; a table and two or three chairs with covers complete the furniture of the room.

At one end of the divan there is a large chest upon which are piled a number of cushions and rugs; this is the dowry of the daughters of the house; very often the chest is empty. The whole is covered with a richly embroidered cloth and the higher the pile the richer and more diligent is the mistress of the house reputed to be.

The Moldavian costume is very similar to that of the Little Russian, and has points of resemblance with the Turkish dress. The men wear a *caftan*, caught in by a woollen belt of different colours. The well-to-do peasant wears a wide strap over this, ornamented with buttons, little crosses, and metal cabochons. Wide trousers of blue cloth are tucked into tall top-boots with high heels.

The women wear cotton, woollen, or silk dresses, over which they put a lined vest and a silk or cotton fichu, usually of a startling colour. Married women hide their hair under a handkerchief, and young girls wear it in plaits falling on to the shoulder, or rolled into a chignon and held with a comb ornamented with glass beads. All the Moldavian women have a great love of jewellery of every description.

The ordinary food of these peasants is the *mamalyga* pastry made of maize flour, without yeast; it takes the place of bread and often constitutes the whole of their menu. No knives, forks, or spoons are required, so the table is quickly laid. They break off a piece of *mamalyga*, roll it between their fingers, dip it in melted butter or dripping, and then into some *brynsa*, or cheese made of sheeps' milk. The Moldavian peasant is not greedy, and is quite satisfied if he has enough maize flour to keep

him from starvation ; but on the other hand his sobriety cannot be praised, as he drinks not only for the pleasure of drinking, but takes pleasure in the different degrees of drunkenness, consuming a large quantity of wine and brandy during his *sokotellos* or friendly chats.

The village tavern is always full of its habitual frequenters ; it is the local club. It is here the peasant learns to know the world, and where he meets all the village aristocracy, the mayor, the notary, and so on.

The man is considered the master of the house in all the force of the word ; after dinner, the wife, having said the prayer, rises and kisses her husband's hand. And yet all the weight of the household falls on her ; she is very laborious and contributes a great deal to the comfort of the home.

The husband is rarely at home, most of his time is spent at the tavern with his boon companions, but when at home he dozes peacefully stretched on the stove. At friendly gatherings the men always have the best places, and take precedence over the women everywhere, even in church, where the latter sit at the back.

The Moldavians, without exception, are very devout, and scrupulously observe the rites of the Orthodox Church, without understanding the meaning of them. The marriage ceremony is very original. The young man chooses his own bride, and intervention on the parents' part is practically unheard of.

" Let my daughter marry whom she will," says the father philosophically, " she will be the man's wife, not I."

The mother, used to submitting, agrees with him.

If the young man cannot find a suitable bride in his village, he goes off with a married male friend to the neighbouring villages, and looks round until he finds a black-eyed maiden to his taste. For some months he

reveals to no one that his search has been fruitful. Only when he has ascertained that his lady love is willing to bestow on him her hand and heart, does he announce to his parents his intention to get married. His parents give their consent, unless his choice be unworthy, when they beg their son in a friendly manner not to carry out his intention, and their intervention is limited to that. The young man must then dispatch some of his men friends to the village to ask the parents for their daughter's hand, and then only are the young people formally introduced to one another, the fiancée kissing every one's hand, including her future husband's.

The bridegroom's friends discuss the amount of the dowry, while other men fire off pistols in the courtyard as a sign of rejoicing.

A supper is given, during which two plates are placed on a table apart ; on one the girl's parents put a ring and a handkerchief, and on the other the prospective bridegroom puts pieces of silver. The father calls his daughter and tells her to choose. The girl takes the money, and the man the ring and handkerchief, so end the espousals. Before leaving, the parents and friends fix the wedding day, called the day of the answer.

On the Saturday preceding the wedding, which usually takes place on a Sunday, the fiancé invites his relations and all young people of the village to his home. After asking his parents' blessing, he goes off on horseback accompanied by his men friends to fetch home his bride.

A band of musicians ride in a cart in the middle of the cortège, and sing and play the whole of the way.

Upon approaching the girl's village, the bridegroom sends two *hounokari* to announce the arrival of the nuptial cortège, and one of the two gives a speech something in the style of the following :—

" Good day, beautiful young girl ; good day, good people.

Our Tsar, when hunting one day with his subjects, remarked the traces, not of a bird, but of a young girl who charmed him. He choose from his army two young men, good to look upon and pleasant to listen to, and sent them out into the world. Tell us why do we travel, what do we seek? We are not servants, we are not cattle merchants, but ambassadors from the Tsar. Having found here a beautiful flower, our Tsar, by our advice, desires to transplant it to his own garden.

"Give us some new bread and a linen handkerchief to wipe our lips after drinking wine, another to wipe our horses' bridles. The Tsar will recognize us and will know that all has been done according to his desire. When our Tsar arrives, the earth will groan; when he dismounts, the earth will tremble. But he comes not for warfare, he brings no army and no sword, he comes to submit, to render homage. Prepare wagons of hay, fat sheep, spiced bread, casks of wine, and invite us also."

When this speech is finished the fiancée sprinkles her bridegroom with water, he having entered during the speech, and gives handkerchiefs to the two *hounokari*. The fiancé, to show his gratitude, throws her a piece of gold. The next day, Sunday, the marriage takes place.

The fiancée's friends set out in the morning on horseback, bearing a cask of wine, and make the round of the village, inviting each family to take part in the wedding.

A lengthy cortège is then formed and proceeds to the church, and after the nuptial blessing the congregation throw handfuls of nuts and grain over the newly married couple; then as soon as the wedding breakfast is finished, dancing is started energetically.

The fiancé's friends then make a collection among the guests, and everyone gives money to help the new couple start their housekeeping.

In some parts of Bessarabia, as in Great Russia, the

custom of capturing the bride is preserved. When a young man finds a maiden responsive to his overtures, he courts her assiduously and plans with her the time of her abduction. As soon as he has her consent, he arranges with some friends who assist in carrying her away to his house. Once across the threshold, one of the man's friends fires several pistol shots to announce the news of the abduction to the village. The bridegroom has to be careful, however, that this romantic capture does not end in his own discomfiture. More than one fair maiden gives her willing consent to be abducted, but arranges with a second lover to steal her from the first; the happy thief carries her off from the prospective bridegroom's house at the very moment when he is announcing, with much noise, his great conquest and so he becomes the laughing-stock of the village.

M. Semionoff assisted at the wedding of a Moldavian woman who had arranged with three bridegrooms to carry her away simultaneously; during the marriage rejoicings the young men and maidens of the village never ceased making jokes at the expense of the two unfortunate dupes who assisted at the wedding and whose real grief was justified by the bride's exceeding beauty.

Although following the orthodox religion, the Moldavian peasants are very superstitious and mix a good deal of superstitions with their devotions.

No peasant woman will lend anything on a Monday for fear of bringing ruin on her household, neither will she make up her accounts on that day. Neither men nor women will drink water drawn after sunset, without throwing burning cinders into it to purify it, because the evil spirit hides in water after nightfall. When there is a new moon the Moldavian takes money from his pocket and holds it in her rays, saying: "As you find me, so keep me."

If he has no money he knows that he will have empty pockets for the whole of the month.

They also believe in the *roussalki* and *domovoi*; the latter is to them a good fairy who lives in their houses in the form of a snake, for which reason a snake's life is always spared.

In all countries young maidens love to lift the veil of the future, to catch a glimpse of their destined husband, and the Moldavians are no exception. Sometimes a young girl will run downstairs in the middle of the night to listen for a sign; if the first word she hears is "walk" her marriage is near, if the fatal words "sit down" come to her, her husband will be a long time appearing on the scene. The grunting of a pig at this late hour of the night is also a bad sign. Some girls go into the garden at a late hour with bandaged eyes, carrying a bunch of bluebells and a stick, they dig the latter into the ground and tie the bouquet to it; if it is covered with dew in the morning it is the sign of a speedy wedding.

The Moldavians are great lovers of music, dancing, and singing. The national dance is the *djogue*, in which men and women form a ring, holding hands, and dance about in a frenzied fashion to the sound of a violin, making violent movements with hands, legs, necks, and shoulders, and even stomach. There is an infinite number of popular songs written always in a slow, sad strain, a plaintive melody of sorrow and fallen ambition. The best songs are those of brigands. The heroics are poor, the *voivode* Stephen the Great, who alone succeeded in inflaming the Moldavians against the Turks, is the only hero who has inspired the writers of heroic verse. The following is entitled "Stephen the Great and his grandmother":—

"An old castle rises on the rock, at the foot of which flows a rivulet.

"Domnitza, the young and beautiful, was weeping and

lamenting; her husband had gone to war with his troops. He had been long absent, and no news had come from him. She wept unceasingly, and her eyes shone like forget-me-nots shining with dew.

"Another Domnitza stood consoling and caressing her. Midnight struck, a knock sounded at the castle gate, and a voice rang out:

"'It is I, mother, thy son Stephen, I come wounded from battle, fortune has betrayed us; our army is beaten and dispersed. Open the gates quickly, the Turks are upon us.'

"Young Domnitza ran to the window.

"'Where are you going?' asked the old woman. She approached the window herself, and called to the vanquished: 'My Stephen is far away. He rains a thousand blows upon his enemies. I am his mother, he is my life's pride. If thou wert my son, my brave Stephen, thou wouldst not have returned to this castle, which has witnessed his heroic deeds, without laurels. Haste, fight for your country, haste and die for her, that I may at least sow flowers upon thy tomb.'

"The traveller returned, sounded his horn, and his scattered army rallied round him.

"He rushed with fury upon the Turks, and they fell as wheat falls before the scythe in summer."

The story adds that Stephen ran with the news of victory to his mother, but found her dead with grief.

CHAPTER X

THE VILLAGE PRIEST

THE Russians boast that they have not a celibate clergy. But they have founded the marriage of priests only verbally, and they have destroyed with the greatest cruelty all that marriage means and all that is dependent on it. Marriage arises from love—but the Church does not once allow the word "love," and the Russian priest must not marry after his consecration. So really celibacy may be said to exist—and at the same time the cruel, dry hatred for family and marriage. The Eastern Church blames the celibacy of the West and damns it because of the words, "Be fruitful and multiply." This is one of those webs of involved thought which have been brought to light in order to be able to bless and curse at the same time. The seminarist must marry in the few weeks which come between his leaving the seminary and his consecration. In the course of these few weeks he must find a bride from among the clergy in the diocese ; and as love does not always follow to order, the only foundation for the marriage is the commonest and open bargaining for the dowry. The future priest gets a dowry according to whether he has left a seminary or a theological academy—either one or five thousand roubles, wool and silk clothes, table and tea service, silver tea and dessert spoons, furniture, etc. Among the poorest peasants one would never see such a bargain driven, yet it is not the fault of the clergy, but the Church, which looks on marriage as on the coupling of animals, only in this case it is for life, and all feelings of æsthetical nature,

soul-relationship and affinity are banished. The happiness that comes from children, the joys of parents, the warmth of the home and the poetry of it, are all to the Russians (except, of course, to the educated classes) absolutely unknown. The Church wills that the wedded pair shall set themselves an object in life, in the same manner that a Roman Catholic missionary baptizes savages—as many as possible,—they will undertake to bring up their children to swell the number of those who belong to the Orthodox Faith. No attention is paid to the parents.

After the wedding the bishop consecrates the priest so that he may find a living, then he puts his wedding ring away and never wears it again all his life. It often happens that a priest is left a widower with one or two children after a short married life—and the Church does not allow a second marriage under any condition. And many priests, because of the loneliness, take to drink or card-playing, or form *liaisons* with maid-servants. The first marriage is allowed simply that the Roman Catholic Church may be blamed for celibacy, and every feeling of sympathy or poetry is taken from it.

Family life is not looked upon as a happy state. The people find the conditions hard. The whole Bible teaching of marriage is ignored and the biblical feeling for the family is unknown. The Church looks upon marriage only as a loveless pairing of animals for the multiplication of the human race, and upon any ideas of bringing light and order into married life, as a return to heathendom! The parents may hate each other—the Church does not trouble. The first Church authority of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the Moscow Metropolitan Philaret—he is reckoned as a saint and did away with the right of women to sue for divorce, not only for ill-

treatment but also for attempt to kill. The Church remains indifferent.

The Russian village priest is often the poorest of the poor, and is without doubt one of the most interesting characters to be met with; and meeting him in the street, it is impossible to realize that his was the powerful, tuneful voice just heard and so much admired in the church; neither could anyone suppose that the dignified, imposing person at the altar was this simple, humble man.

When he wears his canonicals he seems to change his being. He stands at the altar a born Levite, conscious of his dignity. The son generally follows in his father's footsteps and the characteristic traits are repeated for generations, so as to form a caste. Learning counts for nothing with the peasants who cling to external things, and to certain forms and ceremonies. The sects which have left the Russian Church separated themselves entirely on the ground of some differences of ceremony and not from any deep-lying convictions. The Russian has not been touched by the quarrels of philosophers, such as divided East and West, and he pays nothing so unwillingly as the small sum he hands to the priest. This is all the more strange when one sees how easily the Russian is touched by the wants of strangers. The pope has no fortune and at his death his children cannot fall back on the wedding portion of their mother, for he does not marry, as the protestant parson does, the daughter of some rich peasant who brings a dowry which saves her children from want and distress. No peasant's daughter would marry a pope. It has become the rule for the popes only to marry the daughters of popes, and as these have no fortune, their lot and that of their children would be very bad if they were not looked after in another manner. The bishop looks after them at the father's death. He is the guardian of all the priestly orphans,

and if the pope has left a marriageable daughter the bishop tries to find a suitable bridegroom among the candidates for the vacant post. The chosen one receives the daughter and the benefice. But he has to make things right with his future mother-in-law, who generally stays on in the house with her younger children. So the young beginner has to saddle himself in his start, to say nothing of the discomfort of always living with his mother-in-law. But in spite of this the daughters of popes are eagerly sought after by young seminarists. Marriage is not allowed between a layman and the daughter of a pope, except under certain dispensation. If the daughter of the dead pope is not of a marriageable age, the living is not filled until she attains that age, then she marries her father's successor. Formerly the son of a priest was not allowed to enter any profession; he must either be a pope or a monk, but now he may serve the State or enter the army. When the wife of a pope dies, the pope may not re-marry, and he is declared incapable by her death of carrying on his office; if he does not return to the laity, he has to become a monk.

At one time there were evil results from this isolation of the priests. This sharp line was drawn round them to prevent lay persons escaping to them to avoid military service, and then the priestly caste increased to such an extent that there were not enough livings to satisfy all comers. So by the side of the old proletariat there grew up a new one that year by year became a burden to society.

The famous Russian author, Shtshedrin (Saltykov) has given a vivid description of the village priest, and the following pages are partly based upon Shtshedrin's reminiscences.

The village priest is, as a rule, very poor, and has only one thought in his mind all the time, and that is, to keep himself and his family from extreme necessity. As it

was with the peasant, so it is with him, and if he finds himself in a small, poor parish, he works himself at the usual labour and takes his share of the cares. I am not speaking of the priests of the new school who let out their land, but of the representatives of the old type, who happily are disappearing so quickly that the majority of village priests belong to the last. Even in those places where a new-fashioned "*Batjushka*" is found, the "*Djatshok*," or chorister, and the sacristan live on in exactly the same way as their forefathers did. The life of the village priests is that led by all the lower clergy, because distress is more threatening in its attacks, and their means are still straighter.

The position of a village priest is much worse than that of an ordinary peasant, for he has larger calls on life—his position has always brought this with it. His house is larger; he took it over as an official residence, and has to pass it on some day to his successor. There are at least two rooms in the house, the heating of which causes much expense. All the year through he has to keep a maid-servant, and in the summer he must have a labourer, as he possesses too many cattle and too much land for himself and his wife to look after. His clothes and his wife's clothes are more expensive, although neither has any pretensions to finery; he must keep a *samovar* and some provisions of different kinds always ready to be able to welcome coming guests, as, for example, the provost, the overseer of the ecclesiastical, provincial authority, different *Tshinovniki* (officials), the police superintendent, the elders of the community, or just simple travellers, who have been stopped on their way by snow-storms or bad weather—where should they stop? In the inn is drunkenness, filth and cold—so on to the priest! So there is nothing for him to do but to keep the *samovar* always going and food handy. But his children are what troubles

the priest most, and he generally has plenty of them. They must be educated, which means that presents must be made for their sake; they are always wanting new clothes, their board and lodging, first in the provincial town, then in the government cities; everywhere new and great expenses threaten him, and money is wanting to supply the bare necessities. Then the old walls of the house give way, and the floor is rotten, and the outhouses are a sorry spectacle. The grown-up daughter must have a new dress, for there is a wedding in the parish, and if one did not go to it people would talk. So the "*Batjushka*" sits late into the night over his books, and thinks how he shall get the money necessary for the new expenses; he must do his utmost to give the women this pleasure, for they have been looking forward to this wedding for a whole year. His parishioners are poor; he often goes in procession with the church assistants; but peasants can only give three or five kopecks: even the village usurer is contented to give twenty kopecks; so what will be the result from forty or fifty dwellings? People do not often go to church. The church rents are not enough to supply bread and wine for the communion. Thanksgivings and fees are very few—and weddings also. If he receives a hundred roubles in the course of a year, it only lasts a short time and his miserable income slips through his fingers. His hopes lie in a good harvest, if he works industriously and God should help him! To each church belong 33 Dessjatinas of land; two-thirds make the priest's portion, and this is what his hopes are fixed upon. Novelties do not attract the mind of the priest. He has a plough and a wagon, but no manure, for his two cows and five sheep and one horse only suffice to manure the garden. Therefore the harvest from the fields can only be a sparse one. The priest ploughs and harrows, in turns with the labourer, if he has the good fortune to be

able to keep one. How well I remember in my early childhood the old "*Batjushka*," in a long white loose shirt, with his hair twisted into a little tail. He leant against the plough and drove his little horse and finished his hard work, without any rest, in two weeks, no one dreaming of helping him. In the harvest, however, he invites his fellow priests to help him, and can reckon himself lucky if a few of them turn up to do so.

"The food is prepared for forty, and only twenty came! So I can pour the cabbage broth on the manure heap," he murmurs sadly to himself. The work goes on but slowly; the priest works the first row, but the peasants do not hurry themselves, they look at the sun, and point to it after two hours' work, meaning it is time to dine. It does not help matters much that a glass of vodka and a piece of black bread with salt has been given to them already, and it has to be repeated to postpone the dinner hour. All the same the work is very slow. Some even throw down their things, saying, "After all, we are not convicts." So there is nothing to do but to hand round the dinner; the priest and his family do this; the oats have been prepared with hempseed oil and the meat has the same bad smell as the peasants'—but they forgive the peasant, whereas they reproach the priest. "We have worked until we are tired, and he gives us bad meat to eat." The priest smiles a forced smile after the repast and says, "Now, gentlemen of the community, please reap for another hour, before starting on the way home." But already half of the reapers are well on their way, and soon the others go home in dead silence without singing.

It is fortunate if the priest's sons come home for the holidays in time to help with the hay. The eldest has already finished his studies in the seminary and reads the Epistle during Mass in a deep bass voice, the younger

sons already " bellow " as the peasants say, and thanks to their help the " *Batjushka* " cuts his hay. His wife sometimes tries to invite the village women to lend a hand in the more easy work out of doors, but she does not profit much by their help.

" It makes one ill only to look at these women," she thinks in her heart, but says out loud, " Little women, take pains to help your spiritual father, do not shake the ears of corn or the wheat will be lost."

The priest makes up his accounts in the middle of September and is bent with grief. Excepting the seed, he has only from ten to twelve *Tshetvert* of rye and twenty *Tshetvert* of oats left to nourish himself and his family, to feed the cattle, and to sell. Some priests keep bees, and these give a little profit, particularly if the old father who lives in the house and who was also a priest, pays attention to them : wax and honey sold in the autumn bring in about 20 to 30 roubles.

The curiosities of the place are another source of help for the priest, and he collects these. Easter brings him in a supply of eggs and confectionery which will not keep. At funerals and funeral feasts he also gets his share of the bad cakes. After the harvest the priest and church assistants make a procession, and the peasants then shake one or two measures of corn into the wagon, while his wife receives a handful of hempseed.

In the autumn the priest, like the peasant, must purchase his supplies for the winter ; woe to him if he delays, he will reproach himself the whole winter if he has missed the right moment and has to pay dearer. In his food the village priest also resembles the peasant. Old meal, oats and hempseed oil, stale bread, thin soup, which is only salted when it comes to table to save the flavour from being lost in cooking—this is his daily food ; the *samovar* and delicacies are only kept to impress strangers

with the fact that the priest knows how to live "like a man." Really his life is much harder than that of the peasant. He must never expect to attain to any position of comfort, and the future is looked forward to with dread; for with age he will lose his place. His sons can be no support to him. After their studies are finished they go away to earn their bread, the daughters stay at home for who will marry such poor girls? His sad thoughts he can share with no one—for with all his poverty he is no peasant; he does not know what to do all the long winter evenings. He knows no handicraft, everyone cannot write sermons and there is always a thick volume handy. He walks up and down his room, evening after evening, looking at the portraits of the archbishops, and is glad when it is nine o'clock and the thin soup is served, and he can go to sleep after the short prayer. He dreams that the commission for the betterment of material things has ordered that the stipends of priests should be raised He tells his wife this, who replies, "Well! feed the cattle! Later on we will lay the cards to see if your stipend is going to be increased!"

Years pass in this way, monotonous years and full of care. The village priest dreams of promotion to another richer parish; this hope is scarcely ever realized; he is poor and has no influence; he can reckon himself happy if he keeps his place when age creeps on. How difficult life is for him! When he gets one of his daughters married he has to beg his fellow-clergy for help, look up old benefactors, drive to town to address all shopkeepers in turn as "sons of the true faith." Everywhere he hears, "Come, little father, shall we have a drink?" The result of such a call is brilliant if he received a bank-note for three roubles towards the dowry. What expenses, what disturbances there are in the family about this wedding! He must kill a cow, make debts, and it will

be a long time before he recovers from the effects of it.

The daily cares go on meanwhile just the same—there has not been enough rain and the whole harvest is suffering; soon there is too much rain and the corn begins to rot. Comfortless, the "*Batjushka*" wanders in his white shirt over the farm, looks up at the clouds and sighs: "We shall not have enough corn to sow!" Then he remembers that mushrooms will grow in damp weather, so he goes off to get some. Then he sees a blue spot in the sky! . . . Thank God, perhaps to-morrow the sun will shine! The whole village wakes up in fine weather. The priest, assisted by his family, hurries to bring the sheaves under the roof and thresh the corn. The corn is very light, of a bad quality, the harvest 25 per cent. worse than last year's. So his struggle for the daily bread never ceases; wherever he looks he is threatened. His children away have forgotten their old father; he is getting old and troubles come thicker and thicker; he finds it difficult now to read print; his hand can hardly carry the heavy altar cross, and he can no longer work in the fields, and he can hope for help from nobody! His eldest son has been teaching in the seminary for ten years; the second is a priest in Siberia; the third has not succeeded at anything, and fills the miserable post of Chancery clerk. His daughters are married and have their own troubles about their children; the youngest went into a convent. The "*Batjushka*" has let his little piece of land, and drags on a dull existence with his wife, who is already very feeble. They have but few wants, but in the background there lurks that terrible moment when he will be superannuated. Then a new priest will come. The old one sells the house and withdraws into a hut where he lives on the wretched crumbs which fall from the miserable table of his successor—if the said successor be kind enough to permit this.

According to old custom the chorister accompanies the "*Batjushka*" in his begging for corn and eggs, but his portion yearly grows smaller and smaller.

Such is the life of the village priest in Russia. The Church possesses untold wealth, the higher clergy live in abundance and luxury, but the *pope*, the village priest, drags on a miserable existence. How is he to have any influence over the moujiks, or gain the latter's respect?

Many priests without livings go to St Petersburg, Moscow, and other cities, and offer their services to rich persons, who have chapels in their own houses and wish to hear Mass in them. But the Russian has a trading spirit and buys nothing without trying to beat down the price. He holds it his duty to hear Masses, but he prefers hearing them said by him who charges the least. When a Russian looks for someone to say a Mass, there is generally a noisy auction outside the church door. Many funny stories are related in Russia about dealings with popes. If the bargain was long in the making, the pope would take a piece of bread or cake out of his pocket and threaten to bite a piece off, then for that day he would be incapacitated from saying Mass. Many would accept the price, simply through fear of not being able to procure a Mass for that day. But there were others who knew with whom they were dealing, who would answer quietly:

"Well, bite then, little father! if you do not say the Mass for me, another will!"

And the little father thought about it. Saint Ambrose was hated by the popes, and his horrible murder was the consequence of this hatred. There is great improvement in the condition of the popes to-day when their sons are not obliged to follow in their father's footsteps. You meet the sons of popes now among the professors at the University, among officials and merchants. And from a social point of view the position of pope has improved

in the last twenty years. Before the liberation he was despised by landowners and badly treated, but he had to put up with everything. Money had weight in those days and an influential landowner could easily ruin him. If he were quite submissive a little present might come his way, and this was useful for his family in their straitened circumstances. Poor he always was; to better his position means to go right down to the root of matters, which is not to be expected of his spiritual superiors. He never had a fixed salary. To-day he gets his income from the land appointed to him, and from burials, baptisms and presents of money or provisions which are given to him on the procession with the holy picture. That is his great day, for if every one gives even a little the store-room is filled for a while. His wife generally goes with him, ostensibly to help to carry, but in reality because people give more to her. The law forbids the pope's wife to accompany her husband.

A Protestant pastor would be out of place in a Russian village; the Russian peasant does not want a man to preach well and sometimes touch his conscience, nor one who will read the Bible to him, for the Russian peasant does not lay so much weight on Bible reading as the Protestant does; but the peasant does exact that the pope shall be thoroughly acquainted with the rules and ceremonies of his church, and that he consciously shall not deviate from the old customs.

The clergy in Finland are the exception, for there they are, as a rule, well paid. Their houses are generally near the church; some fields go with it, but they are rented to a peasant. The old clergy have auxiliaries, and there are "Chapels" which are served from the Mother Church. The clergy are looked up to with respect, and their life is very different from that of the Russian popes. The clergyman represents the Government on certain occasions.

All the education the Finn has is due to the clergy, and the results are very good. The striving of the Finn after knowledge is favourable to this. There are newspapers, and thousands of people take them in. The peasant sits in the window to get the last gleam of light and reads his paper. Many of the peasants' sons have worked well, and after studying at Helsingfors have become clergymen, professors, lawyers, judges and merchants, all by their own endeavours. Only in a small part of Finland were the peasants serfs, and that was in the part which first became Russian. The Finn is not a wanderer like the true Russian; he loves the land where he was born, he has no wish to leave his home, and seek his fortune in a foreign land.

"It is better to drink water out of a shoe in your own land, than to drink mead (honey drink) out of a golden goblet in a strange land."

CHAPTER XI

RELIGIOUS LIFE

HAVING spoken of the village priest, it will be necessary for the better understanding of his wretched life and miserable condition to acquaint the reader with the Russian's religious life in general, as well as with the spirit of Sectarianism and the *Raskol.*

Russian religion centres on the other side of the grave. One would say that Russia finds the earthly life of the Saviour too coarse and real. It listens with half-closed ears to the teaching parables and commandments of the Redeemer; it keeps them in its memory, but not in its mind. But when the Redeemer comes to the Cross, Russia is attentive and opens its ears, and its heart beats. Christ is dead, then Russia is full of anxiety. It is no story, but a warm-blooded fact for Russia. It has lived through the whole unspeakable sorrow of Golgotha. But that is not all, that is not the "Quintessence of Russian Faith." In the Gospel are to be read certain short chapters about his life beyond the tomb. He appears to his disciples, and disappears. His words are few and secret. And his speeches and appearance bear the sign of the secrets from the other side. The Russian has grasped the beauty of death; he understands the enigmatical splendour of it; he knows how to die, and in sickness and in sorrow he is a fine being. He dreads sudden death without confession, and courts battle with death, that at least helps to blot out his sins. Life appears black to him, but everything seems brilliant and white as death approaches. Life is the night, death is the rising

of the sun. In youth and in the flower of his age, the Russian is not a church-goer, but when once he has passed his fiftieth year sicknesses fall on him, and sorrow has entered into the family, and his fortune has disappeared, or he has not been able to earn as much as he dreamed of in his youth, he becomes religious. His children have left him and think but little of their parents. He finds himself unnecessary, and lonely, and he steps into a church and finds there everything which he desires, and the church does not notice that he has lost everything and is forsaken by friends and relations, but receives him as a friend with gentle pity and forgives him his spoilt, disorderly life. A thousand fine threads bind him to the Church, so honoured by his country, and which has so much historical significance. And he finds again, as it were, a situation and a wage, for in the Russian Church poverty and weakness and misery are treasured as positive virtues. Theatres, plays, pleasures and joys are to him an abomination. He has found Christ, but the Christ of the Resurrection. The pale face of the Lord, with his winding clothes, in which Joseph of Arimathea and Magdalene have wrapped him, attract him. Every old man and woman in Russia keeps a bundle of white pieces of linen, stitched in a certain manner, to serve for their grave clothes, and a cross made of cypress wood (never of metal) to hang round their necks when they lie in their coffins. This bundle is taken with them on their journeys, so that there shall be no mistake, and that if they died suddenly, they should not be buried in the linen prepared for someone else. When a man dies, women, only women, may wash him, for man is born of woman, and must also be laid in his coffin by women. He is dressed in his shirt, and everything costly, such as gold and silk, is removed. A nun reads the psalms of David by his coffin all the time until the burial. The Church sends a gold embroidered cover for the dead man,

and although no one has said it, and it is written nowhere that he is now a priest, yet the thoughts of the lookers-on reach further than the words of the regulations. Great wax candles stand round him, in shining silver candlesticks. Three candles are lighted and the Psalms are read. Dead beings are higher, holier than men; any man from the ancient world would say, "These people have as many gods as there are dead people; the dead wear priests' clothes and incense is swung before them, and they read the psalms and intone prayers." And this seems to be the germ of Russian religion.

Kieff was the cradle of Christianity in Russia; the exact date at which it was preached here is unknown, but there is a clause in a treaty between Prince Igor and the Emperor of Constantinople dated 945 which reads:

"No Russian, baptized or unbaptized, shall cause a rupture with Greece."

This proves that there were Christians at Kieff at that date; but it was not until 988, under Prince Vladimir, that the pagan god of Kieff was thrown down, publicly beaten with sticks, and the whole population baptized in the waters of the Dnieper. The Russian Church was founded under the auspices of the patriarchs of Constantinople, has always remained in communion with the Greek Church, and has acknowledged for centuries the supremacy of the patriarch of Constantinople.

In his efforts for the centralization of Russia, Peter the Great desired to be head of the Church, and thenceforward the latter was placed under the authority of the Tsar, and administered by a college of prelates and functionaries under the presidence of a metropolitan. This college was named the very Holy Synod. As regards the external powers of the Church, they are vested in the Tsar even more fully than in the Pope, he appoints every priest to the different churches; and they are as subject

RUSSIAN PRIESTS AT THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF ALEXANDER NEVSKY AT ST. PETERSBURG

to him as any layman. But on doctrinal questions, although supreme head of the Orthodox Church, the Tsar may not pronounce, but must consult the Holy Synod and the Eastern patriarchs for the most trifling modification. A significant trait of the Orthodox Church is that the chief procurator of the synod is a layman, the Tsar's creature, interpreter of his will. Each department of Russia has its bishop, and each bishop has under him a consistory composed of lay members ; the minor clergy are absolutely subordinate to the episcopal authority. The relations of Ambrose, *Arkhierey* of Pensa, with Alexander I., show the very real independence of the ecclesiastical authority in matters of faith. This archbishop was known by his subordinates as Ambrose the Terrible, because of the severity of his administration. As regards the civil authorities he was powerless to act, but he never lost an opportunity of censuring them. While he was celebrating the offices in his cathedral he thought nothing of reprimanding the Governor, or the Chief of the Police, or any dignitary who appeared to be inattentive.

In 1824 the Emperor Alexander I., having announced his intention of visiting Pensa, the town began preparations long beforehand to receive him. Streets were cleaned, and the various public edifices repaired and embellished, but the *arkhierey* made no attempt to restore the episcopal palace, falling in ruins, and did not even cause the dirt to be cleared away in front of it. The Governor dispatched the Chief of the Police to request that the Archbishop would have the space in front of his palace swept before the Emperor's arrival.

" Very good," said the *arkhierey*, " the dirt can be cleaned up, but how will you cleanse the dirty acts which you and the Governor are continually committing ? Though we should bury you underground, your dirty works would still remain."

The civil authorities had decided to receive the Emperor at the principal door of the cathedral, but the Archbishop strenuously opposed it, and declared that the reception must take place at the southern door, and there he took up his position with all his clergy, and with banners flying.

The Governor and Chief of the Police represented in vain that the Emperor would be obliged to mount very steep steps, the Archbishop replied briefly :

" I am the Archbishop, and I have the right to make such arrangements as I like."

The Tsar protested that his legs were painful, and that he thought the staircase very steep, upon which the Archbishop replied :

" Do your legs hurt you when you dance ? " and escorted the Tsar up the steep staircase.

Upon reaching the porch Alexander was preparing to kiss a statue carried by a priest before receiving the Archbishop's blessing, when, to the amazement of the crowd, the Archbishop stopped him and signed to him to bow to the ground. The Tsar obeyed, and was again advancing to the statue, when the Archbishop once more stopped him, and intimated that he must bow three times. The Tsar obeyed, and then proceeded to kiss the statue.

The service over, the Emperor was escorted to the apartments prepared for him in the Governor's palace. As he was preparing to rest, the cathedral bells started a furious peal ; the Archbishop had decided to come at that late hour to sprinkle the apartments with holy water, and was advancing in solemn procession with his clergy.

Alexander dispatched an adjutant to say that he could not receive him at that moment, but Ambrose continued peacefully on his way. On reaching the palace, General Dibitsh advanced to meet him.

" As adjutant-general of the Tsar, I convey to you his Imperial order to return home."

" You are the adjutant of an earthly Tsar," replied the Archbishop coldly, " I am the adjutant of the Tsar of heaven."

" I forbid you to enter," cried the General beside himself.

" There is no earthly power which can bar the passage of our Lord's cross," replied the Archbishop calmly, and entered the Tsar's apartments in the same quiet way.

Alexander was compelled to rise and receive his importunate guest, and also to listen to a very biting sermon.

The next morning a review was to be held, and also a solemn service at the cathedral. The Tsar dispatched his adjutant with the request that the Archbishop would begin the Mass at six o'clock, and would finish the service as soon as possible.

" Tell the Emperor," said Ambrose, " that I shall begin my service neither earlier nor later than usual, and shall make it neither longer nor shorter than the Church ordains."

Before the morning service a night Mass was being celebrated at the cathedral, and towards two o'clock the Tsar was awakened by the pealing of the bells. He sent word that the bells were not to be rung again that night.

" Here the commands of the King of Heaven are obeyed and not those of an earthly sovereign," said the Archbishop, and an hour later the largest bells of the cathedral rang a furious peal.

We have here a striking example of the impunity enjoyed by an ecclesiastical famous for the austerity of his life and his great virtue. And things are changing very slowly in Russia. The Russian clergy is divided into two classes—the black and the white. The black clergy is composed of monks, who have taken vows of abstinence and chastity; the higher clergy is recruited from their ranks. The parish priests, or white clergy, are allowed to marry, have no sort of independence, and are barely respected by their parishioners.

In his poem, "Who lives a happy life in Russia?" the great poet Nekrassoff has depicted, with truth and pathos, the hard life of a Russian pope.

He tells the story of seven moujiks who set out to discover what class of men were the happiest in Russia. On their way they passed moujiks, like themselves, workmen, soldiers, beggars, people of the poorer classes, whom they did not trouble to stop.

As night was coming on, they met a pope; the peasants bowed low, and barred the way.

"Do not be afraid," said the peasant Louka, "we are not brigands, we are honest moujiks, former serfs of the province *Suffer-Pain*, the parish *Empty-Larder*, the villages of *Rags*, *Bare-Feet*, *Famine*, and *Hunger*. Our quest is serious, so serious that we have left homes and work, and have lost all desire for food in our anxiety to gain our end. Give us your word of honour that you will answer our questions without laughter and without subterfuge, according to convenience and reason."

The pope gave his desired promise on his word of honour.

"Listen," said the peasant, thanking him; "we met by chance, going to work, and a discussion arose as to the happiest class in Russia. Roman said the nobles were the happiest, Demyan said the official, I said the pope; no, it is the merchant, said the brothers Goubine; Fakhom said the minister, and Prov said the Tsar. The moujik is like an ox; if he gets an idea into his head, you cannot beat it out. The discussion became so heated that we decided not to return home, never to see our wives, children, or the old folk until we discovered who is the happiest man in Russia. Tell us, you who live an honest life, are you happy; is the life of a pope peaceful?"

The pope lowered his eyes in thought.

"Christians," he said, "it is a sin to murmur; I carry

my cross with resignation. Listen, I will put the truth before you, and you must endeavour to understand me. In what does happiness consist? In tranquillity, riches, and honour, isn't that so, my friends?"

"Yes," they replied.

"Well, let us see what tranquillity falls to the lot of the pope. I might in truth begin from his birth, and inquire how the priest joins the priesthood, but we will pass over that. The roads of our parishes are impracticable; the sick, the dying, the new-born infant do not choose their hours; in summer, in autumn, in winter, in spring I must be ready at any hour to go wherever I am called. And if I come home with broken bones, that might pass; but no, it is the tortured soul that bleeds. Don't believe, Christians, that the heart can get accustomed to anything, to the groans of the dying, the sobbing by the graveside, the tears of the orphans. Do you still ask whether the pope's life is tranquil?"

The moujiks bowed, and asked him to proceed.

"And now, my brothers, what are the honours a pope receives? It is a delicate question, and I do not wish to offend you. Tell me whom have you nicknamed the race of Stallions—answer my question?"

The moujiks kept silence.

"Whom do you fear to meet on your way? Of whom do you tell coarse jokes, and of whom do you sing obscene songs; upon whose head do you pour every kind of accusation? What do you say of the pope's honest wife, of his innocent daughter, of the seminarists? Whom do you pursue with jeering cries?"

"It is not our fault, it dates far back," cried the moujiks.

"Amen," said the pope, "I was not blaming you, but you asked for the truth, and I gave it to you. So much for the honour paid us by the moujiks. Now for the nobles."

"You can leave the nobles," cried the men, "we know what they are worth."

"Let us take now the riches possessed by the pope. It is not long since the empire was overrun by Seignorial domains. The nobles flourished and provided us with a livelihood, numerous were the marriages, numerous the new-born infants; though sometimes harsh, these lords were generous; we married them, we baptized their children, we confessed them, we buried them. If certain lords lived in the town they returned to their villages to die. The lords have disappeared, no one remains to give the pope a present of a cassock or to embroider a veil of the chalice. We must live upon what the moujiks can spare, pick up his coppers, his meat patties, or his eggs on Easter day. The moujik himself is poor; he would like to give, but he cannot; and some popes cannot bear to take the moujiks' coppers. Our villages are poor, the man is ill, the woman nursing a child, good, pious, laborious women. God help them, from the hand of these labourers it is hard to receive money. What a terrible sight it is when the moujik's family is about to lose its head. I assist at the dying man's bedside; his old mother holds out her withered, bony hand, my heart contracts at the sight of the two copper pieces. It is no doubt honest, a remuneration for my services; if I did not accept it I could not live; but the words of consolation die on my lips, and I return home with a heavy heart and outraged feelings. Amen."

The pope whipped up his horse on finishing his speech and rode on.

The six moujiks instantly turned on the wretched Louka.

"You've cheated us, you blockhead; so the priests live like princes; their houses reach the skies; so you've lived in a pope's house for three years, and they live on the fat of the land, and the pope's wife is plump, and his daughter

fair, and his horse fat, his bees are always satiated and buzz like bells! You've heard now what a pope's life is like; what need had you to invent that yarn?"

This tale shows that the position of the minor clergy is anything but enviable. The pope is rarely a priest by vocation, but by birth, his father having been a priest before him. The bishop marries him to the orphan daughter of a pope, and appoints him to her deceased father's parish.

M. Potapenko, a Russian writer, has described the lives of the clergy of all ranks, and the following humorous sketch is from his pen.

Father Stephan Revoutshi, deacon of Fokmah, after successfully weathering the Archbishop's visitation, went to the *khoutoriane* (settlers of isolated farms) to enjoy himself. He made this round every year at the beginning of August.

The parish of Fohmak was very remunerative, but the faithful were lacking in fervour, not so the *khoutoriane*, well-to-do people, who enjoyed displaying hospitality; on returning from his visit to them the deacon brought back so many loaves that five carts barely sufficed for their transport. This alms was a source of income to him, and provided him with the means of supporting his family through the winter.

After collecting his usual donations, Father Stephan celebrated his visit to his dear parishioners by copious libations, and presently finding the atmosphere of the *khata* stifling, the merry crowd poured into the road, singing their joyful refrain; the deacon's beautiful tenor soaring above all the rest.

Unfortunately, the Archbishop having changed his route, chanced to pass the *khoutor*, and the deacon's beautiful voice calling his attention, he ordered his coachman to approach the joyous group. "Which of you,"

asked the bishop, after exchange of civilities, " possesses that beautiful tenor voice I heard ? "

Father Stephan did not know where to hide, he had taken off his cassock and was in his shirt-sleeves, an indecorous proceeding in itself, but worse than that, he was unmistakably drunk. He got behind four farmers and a woman. The Archbishop repeated his question. Everyone knew that the fine tenor could be no other than Father Stephan, and wishing to glorify their pastor before his superior, and unconscious of his danger signals, they promptly replied, " Father Stephan."

The Archbishop's eyes flashed.

" Which of you is Father Stephan," he thundered. The five broad backs moved apart, and Father Stephan appeared before the prelate, in shirt sleeves, dishevelled, and in a state of utter intoxication.

Next day the pope received orders to go to a monastery and spend a year and two months in fasting and praying. He had seven children, the eldest only twelve years of age, and the whole family were dependent on his earnings as a deacon. The pope thought the matter over, and as a result of his meditation he appeared at the episcopal palace with his wife and children in a cart. Father Stephan surprised the Archbishop feeding his fowls, and at first he did not recognize the fiery prelate in the simple old man before him; but realizing that he was in the presence of the Archbishop, he bowed to the ground.

" What have you come to ask me, Batjoushka ? " inquired the Archbishop, looking with amazement at the deacon and the cart overflowing with children.

" Your Eminence, I am the deacon of the village of Fohmak, whom you have condemned to do penance in a monastery."

" Ah, yes, you well deserved it."

" I have deserved it, your Eminence, and so I am on my way to the monastery to obey your orders."

" Well, expiate your sin; penance purifies the soul."

" It purifies, your Eminence, but I have come to ask your advice before obeying."

" Well, well, watch over yourself; meditate, concentrate your attention on your sins, pray, raise your soul to celestial heights."

" I will," said the father humbly.

" But whom have you brought with you ? " asked the prelate, looking at the cart.

" My wife and seven children, your Eminence."

" Seven children, very good; but where are you taking them ? Are they escorting you to the monastery ? "

" No, your Eminence, I have brought them to you."

" To me ? Why ? What can I do for them ? "

" Whatever God inspires you to do," replied the father.

" I do not understand."

" Your Eminence, I have neither relations nor friends. I submit to your holy will. I am going to a monastery; I am their sole support, I therefore bring my wife and seven children to you as to a father: without me they will perish from hunger."

The Archbishop frowned, and then his countenance lit up with a smile. " You have a goodly wit, Father Stephan. You wish to leave the care of your family to me. It's a daring but clever move, and though you deserve no pity, as the father of a family I forgive you. Return home, but for the future see that you do not get drunk."

Father Stephan gave the promise, but the next day, when seven cartloads of bread arrived, he celebrated the occasion with copious libations.

The pope, like the peasant, has his plot of ground, which he cultivates himself; between these agricultural

labours and the duties of his calling he has very little time to spare to educate the young and for the religious instruction of his parishioners.

The principal Russian sects are the *Staroveri*, old believers; the *Bespopovtzi*, those who reject the priesthood; the *Skoptzi*, voluntary eunuchs; the *Stundistes*, rationalists, and the *Begouni*, who shun the living.

Of the "old believers," Awakoum is an energetic type, and the incarnate spirit of the sect to which he belonged.

According to his autobiography he was born in the department of Nijni-Novgorod, and was the son of a pope addicted to drink and of a mother given to prayer and fasting. He married at the age of nineteen the daughter of a ruined merchant and began his career as a priest. He lived a life of great austerity. Upon one occasion having received in the confessional a young girl's avowal of her seduction, he felt within him the fire of concupiscence; he immediately lit three candles and held his hand over the burning flames until he no longer felt the fire within.

He was no less severe with his parishioners and never ceased to reproach them for their vices, and openly blamed the clergy for neglecting their duties.

Before a full church he accused the Chief of Police of seducing the daughter of a widow. This high official fell upon the pope, dragged him down the steps in his vestments, and rained blows upon him. He finally drove him from his parish, and confiscated his goods. Awakoum was compelled to take refuge in Moscow, where at that moment the revision of the text of the Scriptures was in progress—one of the most important acts of the Orthodox Church. The work had been undertaken by the Patriarch Nicon, and was based upon ancient manuscripts found in the monastery of Athos. Awakoum became the declared opponent of any revision, as being contrary to God's

will: the old text could contain no error. He persisted in crossing himself with two fingers instead of with three, according to the new rite.

Awakoum was thrown into prison, and by the Patriarch's order certain priests were dispatched to convert him from his errors. But it was of no avail, and after suffering great tribulations he was exiled to Siberia and put under the orders of the *voivode* Pashkoff. Pashkoff was a cruel man who delighted in inflicting torture on those round him; he had been given orders to treat Awakoum with severity, and he did not fail to do so. Any other but Awakoum would have endeavoured to please Pashkoff, but from the very beginning Awakoum openly blamed him for his irregular life, and the *voivode* gave orders that he should receive seventy-two lashes, and be thrown into prison.

The pope describes the tortures he suffered in his autobiography: "The dungeon was icy cold, but God warmed me though I was as naked as a puppy in his straw. I kept asking myself will they bring me food, or not? I was assailed by legions of rats, and defended myself as best I might, as my stick had been taken from me. I lay on my stomach, for my back was lacerated."

Awakoum was left at the mercy of Pashkoff for six years, when he was recalled to Moscow by the Tsar's orders.

Nicon had fallen into disgrace, and Awakoum became the favourite of the Tsar, who gave order that he should be lodged in the Kremlin, and came there himself to ask for the pope's blessing and prayers.

The authorities besought Awakoum to accept Nicon's reforms which had survived his fall; they offered him considerable sums of money, and the post of confessor to the Tsar. Awakoum was on the point of yielding when Christ appeared to him in person: "Dost thou desire to

be lost? Keep careful watch." The pope fell on his face. "Lord," he cried, "I will have nothing to do with the new rite."

From that moment Awakoum openly reproached all those who had accepted the new rites, even the Tsar himself. The patriarchs in vain repeated that Rome, Servia, Palestine, and Poland made the sign of the cross with three fingers, whilst he persisted in using only two. "Sirs," cried the old man, "Rome is overthrown and remains in humiliation, the Poles are lost with her, yourselves suffer violence from the Mohammedans of Turkey." And after abusing them roundly, "I am sure," he added, "it is better to be alone and do God's will than to do evil in company with thousands."

These bold words met with their reward; the patriarchs fell upon him, beat him, and sent him with his adherents to prison on the Petshora. There he remained fourteen years, and not only did not cede on a single point, but protested more vigorously than ever against Nicon's reforms, accepted by the Tsar and the ecclesiastical authorities.

In 1681 he addressed a letter to the Tsar Theodore Alexievitsh which gave him his *coup de grace*. The letter concludes with these words: "Give me my liberty, Sire, that like Elijah the prophet I may destroy all the Niconians in a day. In so doing I am convinced I should not soil my hands, but purify them. In the first place, I should seize the pope Nicon, and quarter him, and then all the other Niconians."

"God is judge," he continued, "between the Tsar Alexis and myself; he is in hell; the Saviour has revealed it to me. That is the reward he has received for his reforms."

The Tsar gave order to burn Awakoum and his accomplices alive. When tied to the stake, the protopope

made the sign of the cross with two fingers, and addressing the crowd, said: "If you sign yourselves thus you will not perish; but if you abandon this sign your town shall be buried under sand, and the end of the world shall come."

As the flames reached the sufferers, one of Awakoum's companions began to shriek, then the pope bent to him and exhorted him to die stoically, and the martyrs were silent whilst the flames consumed them.

It must, however, be pointed out that the Russian religious sects are to a great extent the result of political rather than religious causes. For in Russia religion is often a pretext for revolt against a new order of things. The Russian *Raskol* was first heard of when Moscow, with the purpose of centralizing the power, tied the peasant to the land, impeded free commerce, and created officialdom.

The Great Russian is by nature a nomad, an excellent colonizer, ever in quest of some new country abounding in milk and honey. The *Raskolnik* is therefore not a religious Dissenter but a social and political one. In the wealthy merchant classes the *Bespopovtshina*, a group separated from the Established Church and the Tsar's creed, was formed as a sign of discontent. The only means of avoiding slavery for the peasant was flight: some of them joined the Cossacks in the steppe, the majority of whom are *Raskolniki*. Others, feeble and degenerate, roamed the forest, leading a vagabond's life, and in the delirium of ecstasy, or dreamy exaltation, they decided to have done with life and mounted the funeral pile which they had prepared and fired with their own hands. It is notable that the *Raskolniki* have always played the chief rôle in every popular uprising in Russia. The Cossack Razine, who threatened the power of the second Romanoff; the Stieltzi, who opposed the reforms

of Peter the Great; Pougatsheff, who imperilled the empire of Catherine II., were all *Raskolniki*.

It would be erroneous therefore to suggest that these movements arose from anything but economic problems, even though they have been occasionally connected incidentally with religion. Without the iniquitous laws of serfdom imposed upon a free people by Boris Godounoff, we may assume that Russian Dissenters would never have been heard of. This explains the *Raskolniki's* hostility to any institution which supports the new regime. One of their sects, the *Begouni*, declares that the first duty of a Russian is to suppress passports and papers of identity; the second duty of the wise is to abandon parents and family and retire to deserted spots where he is unknown, and for ever to live in fear of being pinioned and punished; for all earthly power belongs to Antichrist, and those who acknowledge this power put themselves at the service of Antichrist. Many of their doctrines are similar to those of the Anarchists.

"You should never recognize civil law; never celebrate the feasts of the Tsar; never pray for him; never allow your son to do military service, nor to soil himself by marriage."

The following is a typical declaration of faith from the pen of a *Begoun*, Semionoff, published by the Russian Government among certain documents relating to the *Raskol*:—

"The only means of learning the truth is to fly from the authorities, and to live an isolated life in the desert. The reign of Antichrist is here; your Emperor is his representative, a descendant of Peter the Great, who caused a census of the people to be taken. . . . I do not recognize the Code, because the Tsar is not a Christian; he has not the true religion. Do with me what you will. God no doubt has abandoned me; I must carry my cross.

If I were to recognize the Tsar's authority I should be false to God."

Many of these sectarians hold by this declaration; simple vagabonds, they roam from department to department, believing it to be sinful to have a fixed home, or family ties, or to live in peaceful calm during Antichrist's reign. Others work themselves into a state of spiritual exaltation until they feel a call to voluntary martyrdom, to sacrifice their lives to Christ that He may have pity on their survivors. When a *Begoun* has reached this pitch he endeavours to communicate his zeal to others, to inspire them with the same joy he feels himself at the idea of this supreme sacrifice. Among the disciples of this savage sect there are some well-to-do persons who nevertheless yield to the *Begoun's* exhortations and consent to be walled up alive or to be burnt alive.

The story of the *Begoun* Assaffi who some years ago persuaded fifteen persons of the village of Savino to sacrifice themselves with him, is particularly striking. He was a man of docile character, and until the day he was summoned to do military service had been a good worker. As soon as he was enrolled in the army, he deserted and took refuge in the forests of Olonetz. He changed his name, which was Stephan, to Assaffi, and occasionally paid flying visits to different villages, preaching the *Begoun's* doctrine, disguising his identity by means of fantastic ecclesiastical vestments. Instead of a cassock, he wore a woman's gown buttoned at the side. Savino was his favourite village, and there he preached that all men were worshippers of the golden calf, who compelled them to bend the knee to him; and that the only way to escape his authority was to fly to the forests, and to take refuge amid the caverns and hills of Savino. Assaffi's preaching bore fruit. One day four families of fourteen persons were missing in Savino and the neighbouring

villages—ten people of forty or fifty, young girls of eighteen, and even little children of two and four years of age. In the house of one man, a disciple of Assaffi, several sheets of writing were found, which the pope was summoned to decipher.

" I leave the grey cow to Uncle Athánasius," read the pope, " and the red cow to Navra. I pray that fourteen *votchines* (woollen garments) may be distributed to little street boys. As to horses, beasts of burden, and carts, pray sell them and give the proceeds to the poor in the name of Christ."

This singular will, and the memory of the lugubrious preachings of Assaffi, filled the people with fear. The pope and some peasants hurried away to the neighbouring fields; at some distance they came across a tent erected over a stream such as the moujiks erect on the Epiphany to bless the water in memory of Christ's baptism.

They hurried to Startzeff's hut, but where the latter had stood they found a heap of cinders and human remains still smouldering. The air was thick with the smell of burning flesh; skulls, entrails, half-burnt livers were lying about. A few steps from this ghastly funeral pyre a little bag was hanging to the branch of a tree. The pope took it and opening it, found a book containing the doctrines of the *Begouni*. On the first page the following lines were written in pencil: " John the Theologian. There are as many lines drawn on this page [there were fifteen] as there are persons burnt . . . and the Master Oukinhoffa also . . . we have fled, we could no longer be witnesses of your slavery to Antichrist. It is better to die by fire. Assaffi baptized us on our way in the Jordan. Upon reaching Startzeff's hut we begged pardon of each other, and then we covered the hut with pitch, and having sealed the door set fire to it . . . we are burning. . . . It is written in the Apocalpyse: ' Babylon has fallen.' . . . St Hippolytus

has said: 'An impostor has taken the image of the Son of God.' St John the Apostle declares that a persecuted Christian bears Christ within him. As they are persecuted the *Begouni* prefer to be burnt alive and to live with Christ."

A moujik began to sob. "Why do you weep?" he was asked.

"Because my wife is among the burnt; she has followed these holy men, these martyrs, who have glorified the name of Christ."

The peasants fell on their knees, crossing themselves devoutly and kissing the martyrs' remains. The spot became a place of pilgrimage; people came from all sides to visit this new Golgotha. The government, fearing infection, gave order for the ashes of the dead to be thrown into the river, and the field to be cultivated. The tree upon which the bag had been found was uprooted and burnt.

Fortunately these sectarians are becoming very rare. Russia is no longer troubled by the *Raskol* product of serfdom, which has no *raison d'être* since the reforms of Alexander II. have given light to the masses of the enfranchised peasants. The moujik is in fact eager for instruction; he likes to read the Gospel, and freely comments on it. Rationalistic Protestantism would appeal to him.

CHAPTER XII

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

ONE of the questions which the enlightened Russian finds most puzzling is the education question. From one end of the Empire to the other men and women combine to bring some light to the *Tshiorni narod*, the *black people* of the country districts. Outwardly they all are united upon the point from men like the late Count Tolstoi to officials of the type of the late M. Pobiedonostsef, who was Chief Procurator to the Holy Synod, tutor and favourite counsellor of Alexander III. Conservatives and Liberals pretend to work in unison on this question, but in reality this apparently neutral matter gives rise to lively discussions and ardent battles.

Every one is indeed agreed that the people must be educated, but they quarrel as to the methods to be employed. Perhaps those who advised the religious reaction which characterized Alexander III.'s reign, would have preferred to leave the people in their ignorance on secular points, but Alexander III. was even more generous than his counsellors—and probably opposed a methodical system of obscurantism. On one hand the Conservatives, hard pressed, realized that if they did not undertake the education of the people, others would forestall them privately or publicly.

They realized that the surest way of keeping their moral control of the illiterate populace was to supervise their education, and keep it in a fixed channel. There is, therefore, in spite of all reaction, a system of State schools. It would be rash to say that the principal object of these

schools is to save the people from ignorance; they seem to be chiefly the outcome of government tactics—to have been established as bulwarks against Liberalism rather than as a help for the poor. They are eminently religious: every teaching is subordinate to the religious teaching, and to the maxims of loyalty to be instilled into the children. The development of their intelligence is of small importance provided they can praise God according to the rites of the Church, and pay the Tsar the respect and gratitude to which he is entitled. Such is a dispassionate account of the religious and parochial schools.

Learning in the schools is more sincerely desired by the other extremity of the political chain, but self-interest also comes into the question. To advanced Liberals the education of the people means to attract them to Liberalism. While they are ignorant they will support any burden, but once they can read and can communicate with the thinking portion of the nation, they will understand that they do not occupy the position to which they are entitled; they will begin to feel that the yoke they bear is irksome, and that is the beginning of *progress*.

Between these two extremes there lie infinite shades of opinion, with as many corresponding schools. Private enterprise has a vast field to work in, and every class of school has a special character according to the convictions of the founder—the evil is not so great after all. In spite of all quarrels the children learn the rudiments of knowledge. They receive a humble but solid education. Later, when they begin to read, time will do its work slowly; but the work will surely be accomplished apart from and above all political factions.

In Russia there are certain declared enemies of the primary schools; they are generally to be found among the scum of the higher aristocracy. As we are still describing the various phases of life in the country, I

shall at first give a brief sketch of a village school, leaving the description of the gymnasium and the university for the second portion of this work, when treating of Russian life in towns.

Russia is divided into thirteen educational divisions. An inspector who is nominated by the Minister of Education is placed in control over each class. The curator has assistants, and nominates teachers to the middle schools, and the head-masters to the elementary schools; he is the head and *revisor* of all the universities and schools in his district.

On the frontiers the character and personal activity of the curator is of particular significance; he has to introduce new methods with the consent of the minister, and is able to change the whole system. In the Caucasus division many alterations have taken place. Where the *semstwos* rule, in thirty-four circuits, there is a particular kind of school. There were 18,815 *semstwo* schools in 1903 (the latest statistics of schools). Although these schools are under the Minister of Education, the *semstwos* are the real heads, opening and closing the schools when they please, and choosing their own teachers and books.

The most important task of the *semstwo* is arranging the salaries of the school officials. The village generally has charge of the school buildings, and the salaries vary according to district: for instance from 195 roubles in Tula to 430 roubles in Jekaterinslaw. On the frontiers the salaries are higher than in the interior (except Moscow). The average salary is 200 to 300 roubles yearly. Some arrange for a standing salary with increase after a certain period of service, others have a different arrangement for masters and mistresses, and this depends on their degree of education. The priests are paid for religious instruction 30 to 60 roubles yearly, or by the hour, 50 or 60 copecks the hour. The *semstwos* are obliged to have a priest

for religious instruction, if the schoolmaster has had no theological education.

The *semstwos* maintain libraries, and reading-rooms for the masters, and arrange lectures with lantern slides.

The Russian village teacher has a poor and miserable existence. His surroundings are wretched, his home one room, his salary a minimum, absolutely impossible to keep a family. A friendship with any "suspected" person is sufficient to make him lose his post, and it often happens that a master is discharged on the evidence offered by "well-meaning" persons, who have some petty spite against him. Once discharged, no inspector will give him a post elsewhere.

Girls and boys get on well together at school, and there is no compulsion to send them to school, but most schools have to refuse a good many children for want of room. There is no external discipline: punishments are seldom given. Corporal punishment is absolutely forbidden, and if a pupil were punished the inspector and the vast majority of the teaching profession would condemn the act. No prizes or rewards are given.

The pupil who finishes has a certificate or a book, generally a Gospel. The discipline is better in the villages than in the towns, and the presence of girls has a good influence on the boys, who are ashamed playing ugly tricks in their presence. The relations between masters and pupils are really good. If there are two teachers in a school, the work is divided into two parts between them. If there be only one, then he takes three divisions alone. The course lasts four years, and the pupils remain in the third division for two years. The masters speak of the impossibility of a three years' education.

Town schools, three classes, a six years' training, were founded by Count Dimitri Tolstoy in 1872. They are useful

for the merchant and city classes, and from these schools the pupils can go to the technical schools.

The material situation of the teacher in the town schools in not better than that of the elementary teachers in St Petersburg schools, but they can be promoted to inspectorships after twenty or twenty-five years' service.

The Village Schoolmistress.—Anna Petrowna Gubina had passed her examination, had received the diploma, "fit to be mistress in elementary schools," when a situation of fifteen roubles monthly was offered her. She accepted it, although she was not really clear in her mind if she had any desire for her calling or love for it. In the autumn, at the beginning of the school year, she entered the village and the school building in which were a small kitchen and a room for the mistress was pointed out to her. So it was not necessary for her, as for many of her fellows, to wander from one peasant's hut to another, and in this way make personally presentations to the peasants. The school was in a roomy building which had formerly, in the times of serfdom, been used by the overseer; the building was old and decaying, and the peasants had undertaken no repairs; the stoves smoked, the roofs let the water through, and the wind blew through every crack. The instruction consisted of writing, reading, the beginnings of grammar, the four rules of arithmetic, and Bible history—that was all! Given a little trouble, in two years the children would know this thoroughly. The village priest saw to the strict carrying out of this programme; the elder of the village figured as honorary curator; a landed proprietor figured as patron, but he always lived abroad.

The school was only attended by boys, but before the children came, the parents arrived to look at the new mistress.

THE POOR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS TREAT

"Only make the children learn something soon; if they only understand how to read and write and do a little arithmetic! We want them at home. If they will not take pains, then use the little stick in the corner. Please do your best!"

Then she could arrange things. She had a plain, unpainted table and three chairs. In the corner was the overseer's old bed, and some nails still stuck into the wall, on which she could hang her clothes; and a man-servant did the work at the school and heated the stoves and swept the schoolroom. As regards food, she was informed that her predecessor had dined with the village priest and paid a small sum for this, so that she need only drink tea at home. The priest very readily agreed that she should partake of his meal.

"Not for the sake of the money," he said. "Who could prepare food for you here? You will not even be able to get good bread. We ask five roubles monthly for your dinner. We shall not serve you with delicacies, but you shall have enough. You shall come to us daily, and we shall learn to know each other. One thing I must tell you. Your office is not an easy one. Our peasants are obstinate, unfriendly, and pretentious. Every one will demand something different, so that it will be very difficult for you to get on. Your predecessor, Ludmilla Mikhailowna, quarrelled with Wassili Drosd and must have been very glad to get away from him."

"Who is this Drosd?"

"A business man who trades in drink and has a stall; he has, so to say, the whole community in his hand, and the magistrates think much of him. As he has one son at the school, he wanted to give Ludmilla a present; she refused to accept it. He was naturally hurt, and blackened her to the authorities, so that she had to go."

"Does not that seem rather strong?"

"Certainly. Above all go to church regularly. I must tell you that only the Church can comfort us in all the troubles of daily life. I must also add, that nothing is so dangerous as a want of religious feeling. Besides, it is aimless to wish to tell the future. You are here now, and must try to succeed here. God bless you."

He was a kind old man, who lived alone with his wife, their children being all out in the world. They both worked from early morning until late at night, and had one maid servant. The *batjushka* busied himself with the land, although it brought in next to nothing. They both received Anna Petrowna gladly, and she hoped to have found a quiet resting-place with them. She reckoned that with five roubles for dinner and five roubles for tea and *baranki* (cracknells), five roubles would still remain over from her salary. That seemed quite sufficient for her very modest wants. She had arranged things as well as she could in the house, but she was driven from it two hours every day by smoke from the stove.

She had hoped to be spared *ennui*, for in the daytime she was occupied with her pupils; in the evening she prepared her work for them, or read the newspaper in the priest's house, who received the paper from the overseer. So life was fairly supportable.

School began and forty boys gathered together; they filled the house with noise and screams. Some were already half grown up and looked insolently at their mistress. It was not easy work for Anna. Her explanations were disturbed with roaring; the boys yelled and imitated animals. She pretended not to hear it, but it cost her much. At last her head ached so violently that she could hardly wait for the end of the morning.

"Really, I ought to be cross with you for not coming to the school this morning," she said to the priest at dinner, "it would have made the first lessons easier for me."

" I stayed away on purpose," he replied, " so that you should understand your difficulties from the beginning."

The next day the village elder arrived to ask if the boys were quiet at their lessons, and added—

" Do not spare them, just remember the rod which stands in the corner ready."

Two weeks later she made the acquaintance of Wassili Drosd, who came to her room without any ceremony, and throwing a bag on to the table, said :

" My son is your pupil, take this ! "

It contained half a pound of tea, sugar, and ham.

" Enjoy it with health ! Here are also two roubles," he continued, laying the bank-note on the table beside the bag.

" What do you mean: it is not allowed," she said, getting red.

" Well, you teach my son."

" That is my duty ; please take that away."

Drosd got so angry that his lips became pale.

" You also despise my well-meant gifts ? " he asked, looking her up and down.

Anna was going to say, " Leave me," but she thought of her predecessor, and how often she had been warned not to allow herself to be drawn into a quarrel with such an influential person. So she said quite quietly :

" I am obliged to teach your son ; if you would like it, I will go through his work with him again in the evening."

" But you will not accept my present ? "

" Do you know you could do me a great favour in a different way ; the stove in the schoolroom sends out smoke in all directions ; the rain trickles through the roof —there you could help."

" The community must do that ; it is a considerable expense to put in a new stove. Good-bye."

With these words he put on his cap, seized his presents,

and went away. She hesitated some moments, and then hurried after him with the words :

" Please do not be angry ; do not be cross with me ; I cannot accept presents. Send your boy to me in the evening ; I will take especial pains with him."

Drosd's expression was sneering and he said :

" Ah ! you are thinking of Ludmilla Mikhailowna ? Well, so far as I am concerned, I will send the boy in the evening. Money I will not give you now, but you must keep this."

Then he hurried away and Anna Petrowna stood alone in the street with the bag in her hand.

When later she asked the advice of the *batjushka* about this thing, he advised her to keep the present.

" Why do you want to make a fuss about it ? " he asked. " ' Needs must, when the devil drives,' the proverb says. Refuse to accept it and Drosd will blacken your character everywhere. We have not started the custom, and we cannot change it. Take my advice, and the other villagers will be more friendly towards you."

And she did meet with kinder treatment. The village elder came to see her, and then some peasants, all with bags.

Several boys came in the evenings and she had to work with them. She had neither time to read nor to prepare the work for the morrow, and the presents were the cause of all this. The pupils turned out to be talentless and lazy, and she had great trouble with them. But no one blamed her, and Drosd brought her her salary monthly from the town.

One day the *starosta* (village elder) went to see the mistress after church, praised her as a zealous Church-woman, and wished her happiness.

" It is right that you should not forget God. Your predecessor went to church but rarely."

The whole winter she worked hard, so that she had no time to think about herself. She need take no trouble for the future, as she received her salary of fifteen roubles regularly. But what had happened to her? Had she ever, even in the saddest moments of her life, foreseen that she would be obliged to support such an existence which could only be compared to chronic torpidity?

She was an orphan and had never known her parents. A benevolent woman, at whose door she had been placed, had had her educated in an orphanage so that she was able to pass the examinations and receive the diploma as teacher in elementary schools. Then the good soul had found a situation for her and given her some clothes and a little money as dowry. But now Anna Petrowna was entirely her own mistress and she must do the best she could. If anything happened to her, to whom should she go? Her school friends were scattered, and lived in much the same conditions as herself. All had to fight for their daily bread. She was more than lonely, for even the most lonely person generally knows some one who will stand by him when the chances of life are against him—but she, who would trouble about her?

She had never thought that she was pretty, but really the freshness of her youth supplied the want of regularity in her features. Even the parish clerk, who threw her tender glances, did not dare to speak to her of his feelings, because he was married. Yet sometimes he sent her poems in which his thoughts were clearly reflected. Drosd had also whispered to her in passing:

"Ah, I should like to gild you—if——"

Anna did not quite understand the poems and did not know how injurious they were to her honour. She was only astonished at the insolent stupidity and felt herself so defenceless that it never came into her mind to complain. Every one knows how easy it is to "undo" a schoolmistress,

and if she had dared to ask for protection, the only reply would have been:

"Why do you tell us such stupid things that have nothing to do with us?"

So she had to go on and be content with what fate had sent her, because everywhere unpleasantnesses awaited her.

In April Andrey Stepanowitsh Aigin, who was the real curator of the school, came to visit his property, to sell some of his forests, and go abroad again to spend the money. He thought he would stay until May, in the meantime dismiss the overseer, renew his agreements with the authorities, and inspect the school.

Aigin was a young man about twenty-seven, as careless and light-minded as a youth. He had never learnt much, and was superficially educated, but it behoved him as proprietor to inspect the school. It meant nothing if he entirely ignored the parish—his name, his payments sufficed to assure him of his importance.

Andrey Stepanowitsh was visiting his possessions for the second time. He was received as becomes an influential person, and was given to understand that it depended only on himself, at any time, to take part in the government of the parish. He declined the honour with thanks, preferring to wait until the first fires of youth were extinguished and thoughts of avarice had taken their place. It must not be denied that his external appearance was attractive, that he was well dressed, and knew how to make himself liked. Only his manners were too easy, and the habit of continually putting on and taking off his pince-nez spoiled the general effect.

Aigin went to the school, accompanied by one of the committee, the *batjushka*, and the village elder; he praised the order and looked so hard at Anna Petrowna that she blushed. Going away he gave expression to his

pleasure in having so pretty a mistress in his school. Till now he had been but seldom in the village, because her predecessor had been ugly as sin; but in the future he would come often. And he added that he would try to find a place for her in the capital; it would be a pity that she should pine away in the desert. There was a dinner on the same day, to which all who had anything to do with the school were invited, Anna Petrowna had to appear. From that time Aigin was always in the school. He sat there for hours together, and never took his eyes from her; when he went away he pressed her hand so hard that her heart beat quickly and the blood rushed to her face. He did not try to please her with flattering speech; her beauty, her youth, sufficed—both were young, both felt the life-force. Soon he called upon her in her little room, praised it, and said that she was clever to have arranged it so nicely in that miserable house, and then he asked:

"Why do you not come to see me? Are you afraid?"

"No, I am not afraid," she answered, trembling in every limb.

"In that case—" he stopped and kissed her hand passionately.

She seemed bewitched the whole afternoon. She did not know what she was doing. Her heart was full of a sweet, new feeling, and she did not understand it. Her whole being was upset; she went up and down her room, looked at her clothes, and did not know what to do. When it grew dark, a messenger came and said that Andrey Stepanowitsh invited her to take tea with him.

She thought, "Oh, how quick!" Then she felt her heart glow, and she opened the window to cool her head. Half an hour later she was with him.

The romance lasted but a few days. Aigin went off in a week quite as suddenly as he had come. He was

not even tender at parting, promised nothing, not even to see her again and only asked casually if she were distressed. Naturally she denied. He drove by the school, stopped the carriage, knocked at the window, and said, "Au revoir." Anna could hardly help moving towards him as if going out, but she mastered herself and smiled sadly.

He had won her heart without any trouble. He had done a common thing, without seeming aware of it. What was she that his conscience should trouble him? He had offered her money; she had not accepted it: that was her affair. He was not the only one: every one did the same thing. It was quite pleasant to get away without tears and reproaches; all that went to show that she was a clever girl.

In the village every one knew her adventure; the young men gave her glances, the old men made fun, the women hated her from now as the "sugar doll" who turned men's brains.

The parish clerk even dared to ask her direct:

"Ah, what time shall I come?"

And Drosd, who heard it, added:

"Why do you ask, just go, she requires no preparations."

The village priest told her he could not longer receive her as a guest.

"I am very sorry for you," he said, "but as a priest I cannot do it."

His wife shed tears, as she also spoke her sorrow. The school servant was the only one who showed her any sympathy. When she returned pale and broken from the priest's house, he consoled her with the words:

"*Nitshevo*! Have patience! the Redeemer suffered, and we must also suffer and be patient. I shall know how to prepare a bowl of cabbage soup for you!"

At last she felt, with terror, that she was to become a

HOW LADIES SHOP IN RUSSIA DURING SNOW-TIME

mother; it seemed as if a precipice were opening at her feet. It was dark before her eyes, her head hummed all the time. Hands and feet trembled, her heart was restless; only one thought filled her mind with terrible distinctness. "Now I am lost!" When the summer holidays began, she shut herself in her room, although she knew that solitude would not save her. "Lost!" In this word lay her whole future. In the holidays the village boys used to collect before her window and call to her—

"When is the christening?"

But one way out of it remained; if she could resolve to choose the parish clerk or Drosd or some other influential man as her protector. This filled her with fear. In doubt, without any consolation, she went up and down her room, wringing her hands and trying to dash her head against the wall. As the day began, so it ended: night brought horrible dreams. At last she went into the town to Ludmilla Mikhailowna, whom she did not even know. In the middle of the night she went on foot the twenty versts to the town, hardly knowing where her feet were taking her. "Lost" echoed always in her ears.

Ludmilla Mikhailowna received her kindly, but explained at once that she was the cause of her own unhappiness.

"That is something one does not forgive, my dear!" she said gently, but Anna Petrowna understood that she must expect no help.

"Help me," she implored, and Ludmilla, touched at last, promised to speak to the mistress of her boarding-house, so that the "guilty" one should be taken in if only as maid-servant, to pass there the critical moment in which her sin would be apparent.

"She will take no maid until the end of the summer

holidays; in any case I will give you an answer then," she added.

On the way homeward, Anna met one of the school committee, who laughed insolently and called to her:

"Evil reports are circulated about you; if they are well founded I advise you to keep within bounds."

He took off his hat and hurried away.

One day after another passed by and nothing was heard from Ludmilla, nor from the member of the school committee either.

In September school began again, and Anna Petrowna could scarcely stand on her feet, yet strove to do her duty; the scholars seemed to suspect and believed that she could not control them. They stormed and shouted with all their hearts, and carried on impossible conversations, as, for example:

"In the Butter Week we shall have two mistresses, not only one."

Her condition became more and more insupportable. When November came with its moonless nights she could bear it no longer. She went out into the country road and saw the mill dam. The little river ran and foamed, and the rain began to fall. A feeble light was shining in the flower-covered window. Only the great wheel went round and round; elsewhere all was still. She stepped on to the plank which went over the dam, and threw herself into the raging water below.

Thus a young life, which had hardly begun, ended. She fell a victim to a cruel fate, which she had not deserved. But Anna Petrowna is only one of the many numerous victims who are continually being sacrificed on the altar of human selfishness, lust, and brutality.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LANDED PROPRIETOR

SIDE by side with the moujik lives the landed proprietor. He is not the same Russian whom one meets in Society in St Petersburg, in the *grand monde*, at Court, or abroad, Western to all appearances. In the country the Russian noble appears in his national atmosphere, and it is there that we can perhaps get a truer insight into his life, into his national home life. On leaving the modern capital and returning to his estates, the official and courtier again becomes a *boyar*, and adopts the life of his forefathers. The houses of the landed proprietors are almost European in comfort. Unlike the stately manors of English county families, dating from the eras of the Tudors and the Stuarts—or even earlier—the castles, if castles they may be called, of the Russian landed proprietors are comparatively of recent date, and have no past and no cherished memories. Most of these dwellings are wooden structures and never last more than sixty or seventy years. The castle of the landed proprietor is therefore usually a building consisting of a ground floor with large and lofty rooms. The rooms are comfortably furnished, in many country dwellings in a quaint Russian style, the furniture being the product of home industry, whilst in others the aspect is more European. Indeed, many landed proprietors, when leaving Moscow or St Petersburg for their estates, where they remain during the summer months, take with them not only servants and personal belongings, but also various pieces of furniture to which they have grown used

in town. The bedrooms in the country houses of landed proprietors are usually numerous. Russian hospitality is well known, and as hotels are not very frequent in villages, a spare room is kept ready for invited or uninvited guests. Should there be no spare room, then the visitor is sure to find a *canapé* or a sofa where he sleeps quite comfortably, in any case more comfortably than in the bed of many an hotel. The windows of the Russian houses are always double, but during the summer one pair is removed. I have spoken of the stove in the huts of the moujiks. Such a stove is also to be found in the houses of the landed proprietors as also in all the houses of the better classes, but the stove is naturally different in appearance from the immense and clumsy structure to be met in the peasant's hut. A stove is usually placed between two rooms, reaches to the ceiling, and is covered with ornamental tiles of various colours. In the lower part of the stove there is an opening where wood or other fuel, sometimes straw, is consumed. The smoke passes through the chimney, the tiles get heated, indeed they grow so hot that it is impossible to touch them with the naked hand. From these tiles a warmth emanates for several hours. I have not had very much experience as regards Russian servants, but from what I know I may safely state that they are more attached to their masters than English, and certainly more than French servants. There is still the spirit of serfdom in the Russian moujik, and he looks up to the *baryn* as to a superior being. On the other hand, however, he considers the master as his little father, is more familiar than a servant in Western Europe, and—*tout comme chez nous*, especially in France—is not above stealing. Among the numerous servants one ought to give special mention to the *storosh*, who occupies the position of a watch-dog by night and of a hewer of wood and drawer of water by day. The life of the landed

proprietor is somewhat monotonous, and although the master and the mistress, who in the capital belong to the *grand monde*, look themselves after the estate and the household, there are not many distractions to beguile the leisure hours. One day is almost like that which follows it and that which preceded it.

In Russia at whatever time you come down, between seven and ten in the morning, you will always find a samovar on the table, a teapot, milk, and bread and butter. At midday a cold luncheon is served, followed by tea, which you sit and sip for a long time. Five o'clock is the dinner hour. The menu in all Russian households is usually composed of soup with a piece of boiled beef floating in it, a roast joint with salad and vegetables, a sweet or fruit. Little is drunk at dinner, but a water-jug is placed on the table with four or five glasses round it. Most Englishmen would suffer agonies if obliged to drink out of some one else's glass, but no one thinks anything of it either in Russia or Germany.

After dinner every one disperses, silence reigns in the house, and between six and seven all the inmates are asleep. Between eight and nine, tea or supper is served, the table being spread with milk foods and cold meats. The assembled company sit and chat, smoking *papirosses*, tormented by the mosquitoes, the great plague of a Russian summer. That is the plan of a Russian day in the country; in most houses, sometimes, the hours of meals differ a little and the dishes vary, but between the intervals of meals every one is free to do as he likes. Above all, no one troubles about dress; in the heart of the country the usual costume is a light-coloured blouse, shirts (*roubashka*) bagging over the trousers, the latter being tucked into high waterproof boots. Excepting for the quality of the material and the cleanliness of the shirt, nothing distinguishes the costume from that of a simple

moujik. The ladies, too, are dressed as lightly as possible, without any attempt at elegance. Thanks to this costume, there is nothing to prevent one from wandering at will through the country, through the dust, mud, or streams. If a river bars the way, thanks to waterproof boots, it can be forded; if it is very deep, boots and trousers can be taken off; you get wet, but the sun quickly dries you. If a river runs near to your house, and the men want to bathe, the ladies are warned to keep out of the way while the men disport themselves. It is a life of unconventional and fascinating simplicity. If a landed proprietor and his family are obliged by circumstances to live all the year on their estate in the country, they find, however, life somewhat too monotonous, and often it becomes unbearable. As a rule, then, the wife finds that she requires a cure at some fashionable watering-place abroad, and there is always a kind practitioner at hand to prescribe such a cure. *En revanche*, the husband suddenly finds that he must go for some time abroad on urgent and important business.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COSSACKS

BEFORE leaving the country and introducing my reader to Russian life in town, I must try to introduce him to two groups or bodies of men, well known abroad, and their mode of life. I refer to the life of the Cossacks and that of the *burlaki*, or sailors on the Volga steamers.

The Dnieper is the cradle of the Cossacks ; on its banks and round its cataracts these hardy warriors have found a secure shelter, and freedom to develop their institutions.

They have played an important part in Russian history, the fate of the empire lying on more than one occasion in their hands, or upon their decision whether to enlist under the Polish flag and keep the Tsar in check, or join forces with the Russians to impede the advance of Tartars or Turks.

Independent adventurers, they have found means of causing their ancient liberties to be respected even while becoming Russian subjects. Only recently the Cossack Atshinoff threatened to compromise the peace of Europe by his daring deeds.

The origin of the Cossacks is obscure, their name has been a fruitful source of discussion, and learned scholars have racked their brains to find fantastic solutions of its etymology. Some suggest that the name comes from a Tartar word meaning an armed man, others from a Polish word meaning goat, as the Cossacks used to wear goat-skins. Others from *kassa*, a little promontory; others from the Spanish word *casace*, from which the French get

the word *casaque*. As there is a territory in the Caucasus called Kassaki, this has naturally been suggested as the origin of Cossack, while others say that it comes from the Turkish word *kas*, meaning goose, or is derived from a Kirghiz word meaning horseman.

The only difficulty is to make a choice among so many possible origins. Of the Cossacks themselves, scholars speak more positively. We are told that the first Cossacks were merely a group of adventurers banded together to live by brigandage and prey. Some say that they were exiled Greeks who came to take refuge in Azoff, but the inhabitants refusing to let them enter, they proceeded up the Don and founded the town of Ischerhaskoz, borrowing the name from a neighbouring people. There can be no doubt that this horde of intrepid men descended the Dnieper as far as the Black Sea and even made incursions into Constantinople.

A traveller in Russia elicited from the Cossacks themselves the following legend as to their origin.

"A tribe of Cossacks, hunting at the foot of the Caucasus, came up with a crowd of foreign people travelling towards the east. Upon inquiry they were told that the travellers were from Poland, that they had abandoned their country because they were oppressed by the nobles and that they proposed, in order to keep their independence, to join the Persians and fight the Turks. The Cossacks, who were also at war with their neighbours, invited the travellers to join forces with them and though they had only four cannon, with the aid of the Poles they succeeded in taking the town of Azoff."

This is why, no doubt, the Cossacks are said to be of Polish origin. The Cossack colony rapidly increased. It was the refuge of all the discontented people from the neighbouring countries, and when the Circassians joined forces with them they became a powerful tribe which

had to be reckoned with. In the middle of the tenth century, they advanced to the borders of Poland, and in 948 we even find a Greek Emperor calling them to his assistance in fighting the Turks.

Too numerous and too restless to remain in the same place, they spread all over Eastern Russia, from the banks of the Dnieper to the most remote parts of Siberia. They are distinguished as Cossacks of the Don, of the Black Sea, of the Volga, of Orenbourg, of Ural, and of Siberia.

This love of adventure has even carried them as far as the mountains of China.

The rapid growth of the Cossacks is partially explained by the contrast between the equality and freedom of their republic and the despotic governments in the neighbouring countries. Instead of enslaving their prisoners, the Cossacks conferred on them the same privileges that they themselves enjoyed, and the prisoners were ready to remain with them.

When Boris Godounoff instituted serfdom in Russia in the year 1598, the moujiks hastened from all parts to the Cossacks to ask to be allowed to enter their tribes, as they preferred liberty and a life of adventure and battle to servitude.

We may say that Russia owes her vast possessions in Siberia to the Cossacks of the Don. This tribe having come into conflict with the Russian Government in the sixteenth century, marched under the leadership of Yermak into Perma and discovered the country now called Siberia. They reached Tobolsk, after having subjected all the people they encountered on the way, but they found it difficult to preserve their conquests, and were compelled to ask help of the Tsar, Ivan the Terrible. The latter pardoned their past insubordination in consideration of their yielding the conquered country to him,

and rewarded their chief, Yermak, in recognition of their services to the empire.

The Cossacks of the Don were the longest to withstand Russian domination. Each group of Cossacks was self-governing, and their institutions differed in details only.

The Cossacks of the Don, the Volga, Ural, and Astrakhan had mostly universal suffrage, and an elected government. Gogol, in his Tarass-Boulba, has celebrated the patriarchal customs of the *Zaporogues*, and their love of liberty.

In entering the *setsh*, the head-quarters of the Cossacks, the *Zaporogue* forgot all that had interested him up to then, his past was annihilated, his one aim was to be in the company of gay companions, who, like himself, had no home, no family, no ties of any description, no anxieties, nothing to do but to amuse himself under God's good sky. This feeling of complete independence gave rise to that unlimited fund of gaiety which was the daily life of the *setsh*.

Stretched idly on the grass, the *Zaporogues* would tell one another long tales of adventure, irresistibly humorous, the more so because, however comical the details, not a line of the narrator's face would move. This is a distinctive trait of the Cossack and of the Little Russian: the eye will denote joy or sorrow, or flash in anger, but never a muscle of the face or mouth will even quiver.

The *setsh* was a family circle of schoolboys; books and lessons being replaced by the warlike excursions of five thousand cavalry. The vast steppe was their recreation ground, bounded by the distant frontiers where alert Tartar and furious Turk awaited them.

One might find in the *setsh* all the seminarists who had had enough of the good fathers' discipline, and who left the seminary having learnt nothing. Some indeed might know that Horace and Cicero had existed, and that

there had been a republic in Rome. Others there were who had felt the rope round their necks and pale death draw near, because in good faith they had believed that a ducat was a fortune. Others there were who had won distinction as officers in the King of Poland's armies, and not a few who thought that a noble was born to fight, and that war was the only occupation that became him. It would be difficult indeed to find any class of men to whom the *setsh* did not stretch out the hand of brotherhood, always excepting lovers. To these it had nothing to offer. There were no women in the community, in fact no woman had a right to show herself in the district.

After a few days' absence every man returned to the *setsh* as to his own home.

A new-comer would bow to the *Kotshevoi*, or chief, on entering.

"Good day, do you believe in Jesus Christ?" the *Kotshevoi* would ask.

"I believe in Jesus Christ," the new Zaporogue would reply.

"Do you believe in the Holy Trinity?"

"I believe in the Holy Trinity."

"Do you believe in the Church?"

"I believe in the Church."

"Make the sign of the cross."

The Zaporogue would cross himself.

"Now you can choose the *kouregne* which pleases you most."

The *setsh* was composed of sixty *kouregnes*, little independent republics, or communities. No man had to provide for himself, the *ataman*, called by the men *batha*, or father, had charge of money, clothes, provisions, and firing.

Sometimes a quarrel broke out in the *setsh*; the champions immediately rushed out into the fields and

pommelled one another until one of them was vanquished. The battle over, they would shake hands, and be at peace once more. The Cossack code was not made to be lightly broken. If an inhabitant of the *setsh* lowered himself to steal, the whole community was shamed and punishment was exemplary. The delinquent was tied to a pillar of shame, near which a club was placed, so that every passer might strike a blow at him, until he succumbed.

The unfortunate debtor was little better treated. He was chained to a cannon, and remained in that position until a charitable friend paid his debts.

The murderer was buried alive, his victim's coffin on his head, and the earth thrown in, a shovelful at a time, until the grave was filled.

There is nothing about the Cossack's appearance, however, either barbarous or cruel. The following is a description of them by an English traveller towards the close of the eighteenth century.

"There is something martial and imposing about a Cossack. His majestic and serious look, high forehead, black moustache, large, black, festooned cap with white cockade, his height, the easy grace of his walk, all combine to give him a most imposing look.

"The Cossacks wear a blue jacket embroidered with gold, and lined with silk, fastening over the chest. Under this they wear a vest fastened into a belt. Very long wide trousers of the same material as the jacket, or sometimes of white linen, but always very clean, are worn over the vest, and cover the boots. They never wear a sword except when on horseback, travelling, or in war, they carry instead a stick with an ivory knob.

"The Cossack's turban is the most pleasing part of his costume; it suits every face, lends a military look to the most insignificant, and gives infinite grace to the walk.

"The Cossacks have thick, straight, black, hair, cut short

at the back, and allowed to grow long on the forehead. Some have badges of civil and military distinction attached to their coats. In times of peace a tail-coat is worn instead of the jacket; their belts are sometimes yellow or green, but more often black.

"No nation in the world is more careful in dress; this coquetry is noticeable in old men as well as in young. A peaceful life seems incompatible with the Cossack character: they wander about without any fixed occupation.

"Passionately fond of war, repose seems to fatigue their turbulent natures. Commerce and industry have no attraction for them, but they are ardent lovers of pleasure and are very violent when their passions are aroused. In dancing, singing, at table, in argument, they always tend to excess. They are brave, generous, and hospitable."

As Russia began to take her part in European civilization, the existence of the Cossacks was threatened. They fought courageously in defence of their ancient liberties. The Cossacks of the Jaik and the Don, and the Zaporogues of the Dnieper, resisted with intrepid energy.

During the reign of Catharine II., the Great, Emilian Pougatshev, a Cossack of the Jaik, rose in rebellion, passed himself off as Peter III., and drew 10,000 men to his standard. The Government troops sent to fight him went over to the enemy and delivered their leaders into his hands. Pougatshev hanged the officers and enrolled the men. He gained adherents at every step among the people, gratifying their resentment against their masters by hanging the nobles. He succeeded in seizing several important towns on the Volga, and the ranks of his army swelled continuously.

General Alexander Bibikoff, sent to Kazan to do battle with him, exclaimed:

"Pougatshev is of no importance, he is but a scare-

crow who sets the Cossacks moving; the general discontent that prevails is the power to reckon with."

Bibikoff expected the defection of his troops at any moment, but succeeded in defeating the rebel in two battles, yet died before being able to seize him. The false Peter III. was pursued on the banks of the Volga, but escaped up the river and fell upon Kazan, which he pillaged and burnt. He was, however, defeated outside the town and retreated to the South, closely pursued by his enemies. He found means of halting at Saransk, Samara, and Tsaritsyn, to hang certain Imperialists who were stationed there. When he was about to cross the Persian frontier, he was trapped between the Jaik and the Volga by Souwaroff. His accomplices betrayed him and he was brought back to Moscow, which was on the eve of a revolution. There he was broken on the wheel in the presence of the populace. Terror damped the effervescent capital but did not stifle the spirit of rebellion which had taken possession of it.

Pougatshev's agonizing death did not appease Catharine II.; she wished to wipe out all traces of the rebellion by suppressing the Zaporogue republic and by compelling them to change the name of their river, Jaik. Driven ever closer to the confines of Asia, this tribe was thenceforth known as the Cossacks of the Black Sea.

This was not the first time that the Zaporogues had been driven from their territory; they were expelled during the reign of Peter the Great and were not allowed to come back to it until the reign of the Empress Anna Ivanovna. They were greatly vexed on their return to find their savage steppes transformed into cultivated fields, and were at continual loggerheads with the colonists.

They clamoured for their vast savage prairies to be restored to them, until, tired of their complaints and indignant at their opposition to all attempts at civilization,

Potemkin invaded their towns and settlements and compelled the more turbulent to take refuge in the Sultan's lands. The others received orders to settle in the Island of Phanagorie and the eastern shores of the Sea of Azoff.

Pougatshev's revolt was the last Cossack protest against Russian suzerainty. The Tsar's government had the inspiration of turning to the profit of Russia the Cossack warlike qualities and their incomparable horsemanship. In our days they furnish the Russian army with a cavalry which is unrivalled in Europe.

The Cossacks do not form a regular army; and in their social life they preserve many customs reminiscent of their ancient privileges. They do not pay the same taxes as the Tsar's other subjects, they have their own judges and general councils; they do not draw lots for military service, but undertake to provide a certain number of horses and men, either for service on the Russian frontiers or in the interior. With the exception of the colonel, appointed by the Minister of War, the Cossacks have the right to elect their own chiefs. Since the subjection of these wild sons of the steppe, the heir to the throne on attaining his majority takes the title of their ancient leader, *Hetman* of the Cossacks of the Don, and visits them to receive the insignia of his new commission.

The Cossack has to provide his own horse and arms, but in consideration of this receives from the Government a plot of land, which is increased at the birth of each son. The customs, tastes, and habits of these adventurous nomads have not been modified by contact with civilization. The Cossack's life is passed entirely out of doors; he returns home only at rare intervals to have an orgy of vodka.

In Cossack towns and villages the only permanent population is composed of women, children, and old men, for while he has the strength, whatever his age, the Cossack prefers life in the open, and as soon as a boy is old enough

to sit on a horse, his father puts him into the saddle and sets him galloping, while his mother from the door of the *isba* encourages the small cavalier. While the Cossack hunts in time of peace, or fights in time of war, the women keep the *stanitsa*, take care of their houses which they keep scrupulously clean, feed their cattle, cultivate the soil, in fact do all the laborious work of agriculture. These rough labours age them before their time, but do not damp their energy and activity. A wife is no longer the timid, trembling slave of her husband, as Gogol has painted her.

"She had known love but a few instants, in the first fever of youth and passion, then her savage lover abandoned her for his sword, his companions, and an adventurous, irregular life. She never saw her husband more than two or three days in the year, and when they were together, what was her life? She had to bear with insults and even blows, receiving but rare and disdainful caresses. Woman was a strange creature, out of place among the Zaporogues, that band of savage adventurers. Her youth passed rapidly, without pleasure; her beautiful fresh cheeks and white shoulders faded in solitude, she became prematurely wrinkled. All her love, tenderness, and passion was concentrated in her maternal love."

The Cossack woman has won her place in the home by persevering toil, and the comfort she spreads around her. She is respected and honoured in the *stanitsa*. Now that the Cossack's life is less stormy and agitated he has more time for his family, and he is becoming sensible of the charm of a less primitive and more comfortable existence. He loves good wine and good living, and by her talents as a housekeeper the woman's influence is ever on the increase.

The Cossack has lost nothing of his warlike instincts. In other days he lived in a state of perpetual excitement,

always at war with the Asiatic peoples of the frontiers. Now that these peoples have accepted the suzerainty of the Tsar, the Cossack can only exercise his warlike talents by placing them at the service of Russia, and he tends to become more and more absorbed by that nation, for which in other days he had the deepest contempt. He has become a precious ally for the armies of the Tsar, and it is questionable whether Russia would have penetrated as far into Asia as she has done, without the assistance of the Cossacks. They alone were at home in the steppes, in the midst of savage and hostile tribes. Who, like them, was able to discover a source of water in the desert, to encamp on its borders, and offer a refuge to those who were eager to push forward with their explorations ?

According to the law passed in 1785, the Cossacks serve in the army from eighteen to thirty-eight. The State provides them with arms and ammunition. From eighteen to twenty they learn the elements of military art, and exercise themselves in horsemanship. When they enter the regiment, they are expert horsemen. Their time of active service comprises three periods of four years. During the first they remain under the flag and are maintained by the *voisko*, Cossack army. There are actually the *voiskos* of the Don, of Kouban, Terek, Astrakhan, Orenbourg, Ural, Siberia, Transbaikal, and of the Amour.

During the second period they may return to the *stanitsa*, but must be ready to respond to the first summons. During the third period they are not compelled to keep a horse, and that is why there are Cossacks without horses, which is almost a paradox. The primitive type of Arab horse has disappeared, and the horses of the steppe are very expensive. The Russian Government has taken the matter up and started a fund to enable poor Cossacks to buy good horses.

The Cossacks belong to the Greek Orthodox Church, and they in no way deserve that their name should be synonymous, as it was until quite recently, with brutality and barbarism. They are in fact the most affable men in the Russian army; the comparative liberty they enjoy has been favourable to their development, and their taste for legends, transmitted from one generation to another, has given a poetical turn to their intelligence.

The *burlaki* are the wanderers "from down there" when they go in ships on the Volga from Astrakhan to Nijni-Novgorod, and wanderers "from up there" when the sailors work between "Nijni-Novgorod and Rybinsk and farther still on the canals between Rybinsk and St Petersburg. They are an interesting people, waiting for their historian. Differing from gipsies in their diligence and from *lazzaroni* in their honesty—they resemble both in their poverty and in their few wants. But what distinguishes the *burlaki* from other wandering people is the patriarchal manner in which they practise law among themselves without assistance or advice from the outside world.

The family is the microcosm of the State and the father's position is the basis of the law. The Russian must have a master; when he has none, he seeks one. So it was for centuries in the wooded North and the corn-growing South, and will be so in spite of revolutions. Following the custom, the wandering *burlaki* choose a leader whom they call *batjushka* (little father). He is the head of the company (guild) (*artél*), and as such has to watch over the interests of the guild and see to the contracts between the sailors and the owners. This leader, only known to the *burlaki* and the owners, is the absolute and unfailing ruler of his subjects, because no one questions his authority.

As a *burlak* he has no fixed dwelling, goes here, there,

and everywhere, always at hand to assist at the quarrels and disputes of the sailors and the agents. He names overseers and gives them a little power.

This overseer is never chosen to do the same journey twice. He is called *pristawnik* (assistant), and has to give a strict account to the *batjushka* of his short office. He differs in nothing from his subordinates, draws no higher wages, but has the trust of the harbour agents, who give food and drink for the ship's crew, which he deducts from their wages. When he is not able to satisfy disputes he calls the *kantshuk* to help. The Russian is not revengeful.

This unwritten law, handed down by tradition, is used on all great waterways. The Volga is navigable for 400 miles. And gold has nothing to do with it. The *burlak* gets 40 roubles for a journey up stream with a heavily laden boat, lasting fourteen or fifteen weeks. This gives a weekly wage of two roubles, fifty copecks—on which any other man would starve. The *burlak* knows how to circumvent the famine prices of the cities on the banks of the Volga. He catches fish and thanks the river, for his private pleasure consists in catching fish and in sleeping off his intoxication. Differing from the other wanderers who sell "pictures," he remains always a poor honest soul.

The boat, which he guides (and he rows when the wind falls) is in comparison with the finished boat of England and Belgium a tortoise compared with a squirrel. There has been no improvement in the build for hundreds of years, but they fulfil the requirements of their owners, and besides that, they are the homes of contented, blameless men, who sing at their work as well as in their spare time, and whose ringing voices are heard up and down the river, so that people, young and old, living near by, are glad to know that they are coming.

His dress takes but little money from his purse, but it costs him more to satisfy his thirst. There are no strong spirits on board happily, and as the ship anchors but rarely, he has but little opportunity for drinking. The *pristawnik* is not free from this failing, but this does not affect his authority. If a German or a Frenchman found his superior in a state of intoxication, he would lose respect and the discipline would be lax; the Russian, on the contrary, would put him to bed and obey him the following day as if nothing had happened.

A source of pride to the *burlak* is that one day he may be made *pristawnik*, yes, even *batjushka*, and that he helps his old and crippled comrade is a good quality. The *burlaki* too old for work settle down in the villages on the river, and are supported by the *artél*, in inns which *burlaki* only frequent. They also have guild-houses in which the sick are nursed.

The *burlak* is from Little Russia, and the sailor from Great Russia is a very different person—is generally an obstinate and bigoted man, and has none of the *burlak's* qualities. These zealots, who wish all joy to be buried deep in the bottom of hell, come from Sopelki, a village lying between Kostroma and Jaroslav, on the right bank of the Volga.

According to the rules of their founder—one Ephim, a deserter, they must always spread the doctrines of *Stranjiky*. They live as vegetarians and abstain from strong drink. This miserable food and continual prayer makes them morose, and they try to avoid mankind. So the people let them pass by. They choose no visible head of their guilds.

There is another kind, a sailor who takes smaller boats from Rybinsk up the canals to St Petersburg, and the freight has to be reloaded. These are of Finnish origin and come from the Lake Onega. The Finns of Great

Russia are changing under the Slav government, as the Mongols in South Russia also change; they are only to be distinguished from the true Russians by their weaker frames. These make their shipping arrangements without the aid of the *artél*, and obey a leader chosen by the ship-owner, generally a Russian sea-captain. They go home like sea-birds in the autumn.

The days of the *burlaki* are numbered. A great rival against whom they cannot compete has arisen of late years, and soon perhaps they will be driven off the Volga. Streamships are becoming more numerous daily, this lowers freight prices, and makes existence hard for sailing-boat people. There are hundreds of steamers between Tver and Astrakhan, and among these are giant ships such as one only finds in the rivers of North America. They are called American boats because they are built according to the American pattern. These floating, three-storied houses are first of all destined for goods, but they do take passengers as well, and the comforts they offer cause them to be preferred above the other steamers which beat them in speed, because of the long stops at quays for loading and unloading goods.

There are five such boats on the Volga. On the lowest deck are casks and barrels, horses, oxen, and sheep, and between the goods and the animals the fourth-class passengers rest on the bolsters and pillows they have brought with them. The air is warm from the engine, and there are many different smells. Day and night there is no rest. The passengers hear for ever the ship's bell; wood is brought in for the engine and thrown down with much noise, and over and over again they must move closer together to make room for fresh passengers. But this does not seem to disturb them at all. They know how to settle down comfortably in the midst of this hubbub; they make tea, eat and drink, play and sing,

and then lie down again to sleep soundly according to their own fashion, and no one interferes with them.

A wide staircase leads to the second deck. Asia is behind us, European taste, and comfort and elegance surround us. We walk through a well-lighted saloon with mirrors on the walls. A buffet entices us, and there is a piano, and if anyone desires to read, he will find a library and a reading-room, with the latest papers. A glass door leads to a balcony running round the ship—tables, benches, and chairs—and one can, if preferred, dine on the balcony, and sturgeon soup—one of the Volga delicacies—will not be missing from the menu. Good cooking, good service, and cleanliness are to be found on these steamers, which are valued, as all three are not always found together when one travels east. The travellers who journey together for some days get to know each other and amusement is at hand, even if the rain keeps the company in the saloon, and the balcony remains empty.

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PART II

THE TOWN

CHAPTER XV

MOSCOW

"HE who has not seen Moscow," says the Russian, "does not know what is beautiful." And really no other city except Constantinople, or the City on the Seven Hills, by the Tiber, can present such a magnificent picture as the seven-hilled city of the Russian Tsars. When one beholds for the first time the sea of houses with their red and green roofs, with the golden cupolas and crosses and many-coloured towers of the churches, when one mixes for the first time with the strange traffic in the streets of *Kitai Gorod*, then only can one understand the enthusiasm with which the Russian speaks of his old capital. Extraordinary sights keep the stranger spell-bound. What here surrounds him is not the East with its blinding sunshine, neither is it the Europe one knows outside the Russian boundaries. It is a mixture of both, but full of characteristic qualities. This is what charms the Russian and astonishes the foreigner. The Russian sees in Moscow more than the city with its holy memories of its past; to him it is also the contrast to the modern St Petersburg, and represents the real, unadulterated Russia.

Seven centuries have passed over Moscow; hordes of barbarians have plundered and laid it waste; many fires have repeatedly destroyed the whole city or parts of it;

yet always has the phœnix risen just as before from the ashes. A real Russian city, that is why the people honour and love it, and call it by endearing names. Moscow was called Matushka, Little Mother, in the old folk songs, and so it is called to-day.

In modern times new streets and stately new boulevards have risen, which do not go well with the little winding streets of the Russian Nürnberg, but all these innovations seem like exotic plants which have been translated to a ground which does not suit them. Modern taste fights against the inherited spirit, and the Russian to-day would rather have a comfortable house than a beautiful one. And he does not like "renting." To have his own house, a *home* where he can do what he pleases, is the ideal of the poorest man. Day by day, as opportunity arises, and his means permit, he buys up the material required for a modest dwelling, and even if many years pass by, at last the day dawns in which the thrifty saver realizes his dreams, and owns his own house. It will contain a good cellar in which he can keep his stores; that to him is much more important than a living room, and he takes care when he hires a house that the cellar shall be a good one. A small yard behind the house where he can keep poultry is also necessary for him. He does not mind if the living room be low and small and practically comfortless. The Russian looks above trifles, his home that he has "earned" is worth ten times more to him than the things he must do without. So it happens that to-day Moscow has an immense number of buildings which form a vivid contrast to the palaces into the ranks of which they have forced themselves like unbidden guests, regardless of any regularity in the arrangement of streets. Sometimes a house has stepped out of the line as if impelled by curiosity to see what was going on in the neighbourhood. Or it may be, the house has stepped back from its neighbours

as if shy, or ashamed of its modest appearance. Great fruit and vegetable gardens, fields, lakes, and ponds lie behind the houses and enrich the view.

Every house in Moscow has its court or *dvor*, and the court is the centre of the house. In other countries if a landlord possesses a large plot of ground, he runs up huge blocks of flats; at Moscow he will be content to surround his plot with little, double-storied houses, opening on to a central courtyard, or perhaps a common garden. In Paris, for instance, one would have a small town with 150 tenants; at Moscow four or five houses at most, and say fifteen tenants. This system is not advantageous to the landlord, but exceedingly agreeable to the tenants.

The door of the house, or rather double- or triple-padded doors, open on to a vestibule containing a mirror and strong pegs, in fact quite a dressing-room. Russians, though, are not troubled by the desire to appear elegant; to have an overcoat of the latest cut is not one of their ambitions, all they ask for is to be warmly clad. The muddy or snowy streets, with their sharp stones, are not suitable for elegant footwear, but indoors it is a very different matter; the floors are polished and carpets rarely met with; one cannot go stumping over polished floors with heavy heels, and so one must wear thin shoes, and put on thick overshoes to go out. As to gloves, no one would light-heartedly risk the loss of a finger by going out with thin kid gloves—good thick gloves, proof against the cold and snow, are essential. For a hat one would scarcely wear a silk hat, it would only be in the way in a cab, or get spoilt by the snow. Thus the elegant silk hat is left for the West or for St Petersburg. In Moscow for summer one wears a white linen cap, in winter a soft hat or fur-cap. The latter keeps one warm, and is not in the way if one wishes to turn up the coat collar.

Overcoat, hat, gloves, and galoshes may be left in the

vestibule. One does not come to pay a ten-minutes' call and to discuss the weather but really to see friends, and instead of being a sort of stranger making himself agreeable one becomes, so to speak, a member of the family.

The dining-room and drawing-room usually give on to the vestibule, the doors always standing open. A series of more or less complicated passages lead to the different rooms and to the kitchen, which has an entrance to the court.

The house, including the entrance hall, is warmed throughout; Russians would shiver with cold in any of our Western houses. They are not satisfied with warming one or two rooms, but keep a more or less equal temperature from hall to bedrooms. The windows are double, and every crack is well stopped up with putty, or cotton wool. During six months the rooms are aired only by diminutive ventilators fixed in the windows.

A Russian house consequently gives one the impression of a vast box, having, with the exception of the triple entrance door, no communication with the outer world. To avoid stuffiness, all the room doors are left open, and the stoves are also built with air passages calculated to purify the atmosphere of the rooms, so that on the whole the houses are airy and light.

Houses in Western Europe are affected by the outside atmosphere, but not so the Russian: they have two distinct worlds during the winter, the glacial outer world, and the warm inner world. Their winter is an enemy which must be fought against, and warmth is no longer a luxury but a vital necessity. It is quite comprehensible that the Russian should make a kind of artificial world for himself, in pleasing contrast to the glacial world outside his home; the rooms are in a way conservatories where delicate green plants grow freely in every available corner.

Indoor the Russians wear thin clothing, but to go out

the greatest precaution is necessary. Fur-lined overshoes, fur cap pulled down over the ears, fur gloves, heavy fur cloak, under the weight of these garments walking becomes difficult, but fortunately there are the sleighs which may be hired for a modest sum. After the long winter months passed in a species of inertia it is not surprising that Russians are not much given to walking in the summer. Their indolence is a direct consequence of their climate.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the lower classes and shopkeepers, all whose trade entails facing the weather, find it quite possible to go about their work as usual, winter or summer.

If every house has its court or door, every *dvor* has its *dvornik*. The latter can scarcely be called a porter, as his duties are too numerous. He does all the heavy housework, sweeps the court, and fetches water from the public fountains. For this purpose he trundles along a small barrow, to which is fixed a barrel with a square opening at the top; but this is not sufficient water, and the residents are compelled to buy a certain number of pails of water from a carrier every morning.

After sweeping the court and fetching the water, the *dvornik* has to attend to the manure heap, and then he is free to lend a hand to any of the servants who have won his good graces. After which there may be some carpentering to be done, or a box to carry upstairs—in fact any kind of odd job falls to his lot, including, of course, the duty of attending to the porter's bell, and answering questions relating to the different tenants. Over and above these manifold duties he is also a *police agent*. He is the official intermediary between the tenants and the police authorities: the post is no sinecure in suspicious Russia, where every respectable citizen has his description at the police station. You cannot move from one place

to another without producing your passport; you cannot pass the night at a friend's house, or take room at an hotel, without producing your papers. The *dvornik* also saves the tenants' time by taking their papers and passports to the police station.

After the great fire in September 1812, there was opportunity to rebuild the city according to some uniform plan; but people dallied, perhaps on purpose. Every one built his house on the spot where it had stood and no one prevented him. So the new Moscow rose with irregular houses, just like the Moscow of the Middle Ages, and Prince de Ligne's remark that Moscow was not a city but only a congregation of from four to five hundred castles, surrounded by gardens and villages, is partially justified.

The area is enormous on account of the fields, gardens, and places not built over. The River Moskwa, which is navigable above the city for large ships, and is covered with small steamers and hundreds of boats, divides the city into two unequal parts, which are united by numerous bridges, and inside the town walls there are many streams. The river winds through the town and is fairly broad in places. A canal, made as a protection against floods, runs parallel to the river. There are 151 lakes and ponds, 14 boulevards, 81 squares, 218 principal streets, and 716 small streets. There are seven cathedrals, 400 churches, and 41 monasteries. All the principal religions of the empire are represented: two Roman Catholic and two Lutheran churches, one Reformed, one Anglican, and one Armenian. There is a synagogue, and a Mohammedan mosque ends the list.

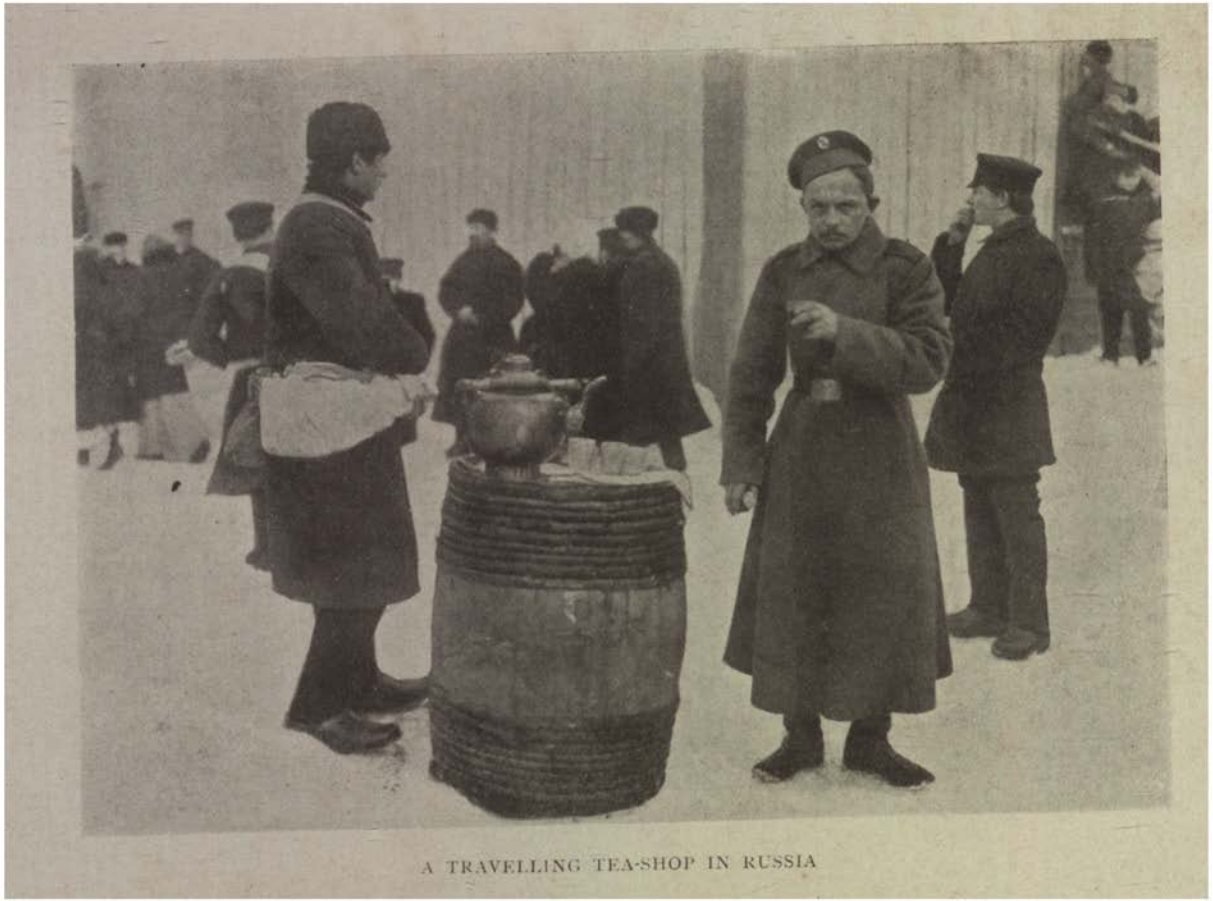
In the heart of the land of "Orthodoxy" so many churches erected to other faiths may astonish the stranger, who knows how impermeated the Russian is with ideas that his own religion is the only one which leads to salva-

tion, and this tolerance is certainly not expected either from the Government or from private persons. But free and unimpeded the Kalmuck can worship his Dalai Lama, the Parsee his fire, the Hindu can call upon Brahma, and the Mohammedan can pray to Allah; and all sects of the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Church, as well as Moravians and Baptists, may practise their religion unhindered. And Russia, as the representative of European culture, encourages this tolerance. It is in consequence of this toleration in religious matters that we see in the streets of Moscow, as it were, patterns of Russian people, who live according to their own desires, and no one hinders them. One is always conscious of new types. There are Tartars and Kalmucks from the Volga, Kirghizes from the steppes on the Ural Sea, Georgians from the Caucasus, Armenians, Persians, Greeks, many gipsies, and all the wandering tribes from the East of Russia, whose names one has hardly ever heard in Western Europe. Here they all meet, as in their home, in their national dress, but it does not cause any astonishment in Moscow, because the Russian of Moscow also wears the dress that his forefathers loved. French dress is only worn by foreigners, the officials who have no uniform, and by a small circle of upper class, for not only do the poor classes remain faithful to the national costume, but the rich merchant, who is one of the gold princes of the Moscow trading world, receives his guests in an elegant *salon*, wearing his hair long just like the picture of Christ, parted in the middle and smoothly combed. His shirt blouse is fastened round the waist by a girdle. This love of the national dress has its dark side, as well as its romantic one. The old Russians, certainly more civilized now than they were in the time of Peter the Great, but not much above them in art and science, are those who principally wear the national dress. With but few exceptions the national

dress can be taken as a sign that the wearer has remained almost a stranger to European civilization. In Moscow to-day there are men representing wholesale firms who are not able to read or write, and who must rely absolutely on the honour and honesty of their bookkeeper as far as their dealing with foreign parts goes, and many a trader and shopkeeper has no knowledge of book-keeping beyond the marks made in a notebook with the help of pins. To understand such a condition, one must cast a glance at the development of mind of the Russian people. One can still see the influence Peter the Great had over the Russian people. The great reformer had not the necessary patience to improve his people from the root upwards. He encouraged Germans and Dutch, and Catharine II. French, at the Court. European civilization, introduced suddenly, never reached the lower layers of society. A very small number of Russians, educated in the French fashion, brought up in luxury and elegance, are, however, to be found without any mediation side by side with bearded, uneducated, strong, pious Russians, quite a hundred times their number.

It is difficult to believe that that little gentleman in waiting, or that officer of the Guards, who speaks French as if it were his native speech, belongs to the same nation as the *iswostshik*, who drives his droshky, or the footman who waits at his door. In all Russia they stand side by side, but in Moscow it is more noticeable. We shall recognize why this is the case if we interest ourselves for a while in the moving crowds, and watch the characteristic types passing to and fro.

There, at the corner of the street, near the grocer's shop, where everything is sold, stands a crowd of men collected round a picture-dealer. Children and grown-ups press round the man with thorn sticks to admire the rudely painted martyrs and Madonnas which he carries



A TRAVELLING TEA-SHOP IN RUSSIA

hanging round his neck by a string. This picture-dealer is a real Russian peculiarity. The Imperial Museums and the private collections of the nobility literally teem with masterpieces, but the people do not trouble about them in the slightest, but hold "holy pictures of saints" in high esteem. It is strictly forbidden to sell holy-pictures, but that does not restrain the picture-dealer, who does good business, in that he exchanges pictures for provisions, and then changes the provisions into money at the grocer's! Just as the district of Tver provides all Russia with carpenters, the town of Wladimir and its environs flood Russia from the Ural to the Dwina with thousands of picture-dealers. These pictures have not the slightest claim to be considered as works of art, but the Russians buy them, and the picture-dealers sell them by thousands, wandering through the country on foot in battalions and pierce into districts where a train has never been seen. They are only found in Moscow as "single spies," but do good business.

Another wanderer who belongs to Moscow's permanent figures is the droshky driver (*iswostshik*). He comes from all districts with his all-enduring horse and the lightly built droshky to earn his living in Moscow. It is no easy life to hurry through sunshine and snow at a sign from a passer-by for a small payment, or to sit for hours motionless like a monument on the box waiting.

The young fellows, whose muscles seem made of iron, can endure great cold, but no one can resist the power of the elements for ever, and so it sometimes happens that while the finely dressed ladies and gentlemen are enjoying the comforts of a warm room the unfortunate *iswostshik* awaiting their return in the icy night air freezes to death.

There is a wonderful harmony in their dress, a long caftan, fastening with a leather belt, high boots, and generally a Polish cap, or a low, broad-rimmed top-hat.

The *iswostshiks* are "sifted" regularly by the police to keep the worst away; formerly they plied for hire without any notice being taken by the police, wandering through the streets with no halting-place. The *iswostshik* is the most agreeable creature you can find. The fare mounts without saying a word, the *iswostshik* gallops away, and the sparks fly. At the cross-roads the fare seizes him by the belt, when he wishes to go right or left, and when he wishes to stop. He is not above taking a tip, but he never demands it as the Viennese do, nor begs for it like the Italians. His health is strong and so is his sense of humour, and he is known for his wit, which is only surpassed by that of the poultry dealer.

The streets are overrun night and day by a multitude of diminutive open cabs; they are ubiquitous, penetrating into the narrowest streets and even into the courtyards of the houses. Their dirty-looking drivers swoop down on you at every corner, hailing you with a "Where to? Where to?" The reason is that Russian streets are almost impracticable to pedestrians; it is martyrdom to walk ten yards on foot. The roads are made of sharp little stones, carefully laid down point upwards; the pavements, if not asphalted, are all hills and vales, and woe betide the careless person who attempts to walk along them without carefully picking his steps. It is nearly always necessary, therefore, to engage a cab. There is no fixed price: the client has to drive a bargain with the driver. If the latter demands, say, 50 copecks—you walk away with a sarcastic smile or offended air. If he has overcharged you he will call after you to inquire your price. You reply 20 copecks; 40, says the driver; no, no, 25; he rejoins with an insinuating air; 20 you say firmly, and take your place in the cab. This bargaining is really quite amusing, and as the cabs are very numerous, and competition is keen, fares are comparatively low.

Sometimes the driver has not the faintest idea of the way and with touching faith leaves you to shout directions, or point out the way with your stick. If the passenger does not know the way either, the driver simply drives about in seacrh of it; you lose time, but the price is pre-arranged. Though the houses are numbered, no one knows them by their number, but by the landlord's name written over the door, and you give the direction: so-and-so's house, such and such a street.

Of the passers-by, the men of the working class are the most striking, thanks to their red shirts or blouses, which they wear next to the skin, caught in at the waist with a belt or string. The more elegant moujiks, such as porters, wear a sleeveless black vest over their shirts, and the effect is very picturesque. Nearly all the men, including those of the upper classes, wear white caps in the summer. And here I shall venture to make a small digression and give a brief description of Russian vehicles, and especially of the *tarantass*. A *troika* is a combination of three things, though the word may be applied to any horsed vehicle. A good trotter serves as a leader, his head surmounted by an arched wooden bow (*dooga*) which unites the shafts, and relieves the pressure on the collar. On either side of the shafts a horse is harnessed to a bar, and attached by one rein to his companion; but whereas, if the driver knows his business the leader should not go faster than a trot, the two other horses should gallop the whole time. The driver pays no attention to them, they are left quite free. If the road is wide the *troika* spreads out fan shape; if the road is narrow, running between hedges, the side horses scramble along as best they can, stumbling and sliding, but always regaining their footing with the marvellous instinct of animals left to move freely. If the road slopes down hill the leader supports the *troika* alone and walks down at a slow pace. Over

the *donga* hangs a bell, well calculated to exasperate the passenger's nerves.

But it is the *tarantass* which is the thing to see. Baedeker pretends that it resembles a carriage; in reality it is much more like a trough, with a piece of board nailed in front to serve as the driver's seat. The traveller sits in it as best he may, having first stowed away his luggage. He then installs himself in the midst of sweet-smelling hay, and tries to imagine it is a delicious invention. He soon discovers his mistake; if there were any roads in Russia, the *tarantass* might possibly be comfortable, but there are no roads; had there been there would have been no reason to invent the unbreakable *tarantass*. With the exception of a few roads conscientiously strewn with very pointed stones, such roads being carefully avoided by carriages, there are nothing but natural roads in Russia. By constant passing of vehicles and cattle, pathways are traced in the forest; no one keeps them up. In spring and autumn they are marshes only to be travelled on horseback, in summer they are a foot thick in dust. Woe betide the unwary traveller who has held out the prospect of a tip for a quick journey: the driver exerts himself to the utmost, the horses dash off; the traveller is thrown violently from one side to the other. The driver urges on his horses in spite of hills and dales; the wretched traveller, bruised all over, crouches down in the very middle of the straw, and confines himself to trying to avoid contact with the different objects round him. It is the only way of travelling in a *tarantass*.

In dry weather the dust adds to the discomfort of the journey. The roads are covered with a thick white carpet; a scampering dog raises such a cloud of dust that you think a rider is advancing towards you; the cloud raised by two or three horses is like the smoke from a burning building. Soon the traveller is covered from

head to foot, and the fine grey specks manage to find their way into the most tightly closed boxes. But let us return to the streets of Moscow.

The gipsy is another street type. Wandering from the banks of the Black Sea, he takes the place of the German Jew clothes dealer. As peace loving and as cunning as his Western brother, he keeps his sharp eye on the look out for left-off clothes, or clothes just going to be left off, so that he can ply his trade. Without any claims or desires, like an Indian fakir, not caring for strong drink, in a few years he can collect enough money to return to his own sunny land and buy himself a piece of ground and live on it with his family for the rest of his days without care. Why should any philosopher preach to this man ?

Another philosopher, but of a different kind, is the *dwornik,* who has been the secret agent of employers and police since time out of mind. To some extent the *dwornik* finds his countertype in the French concierge

He shuts his eyes when the Privy Councillor visits the dancer on the second floor ; he shuts both eyes tightly when the officer on the third floor keeps very noisy company, expecting the said company will press some coins into his hand when they go ; his only grief is that he can neither read nor write ; but in spite of that he has many sharers of his grief, as the breadseller who carries a Christ-like head on his shoulders, and who helps his arithmetic with a notched stick, and the smart milkwoman who counts on her fingers. But all these people have the gift of fluent speech and this distinguishes them from their more civilized Western brothers, and they know how to use it on every opportunity. They never break out into quarrel, for the Russian's great characteristic is good temper and compatability But wait, a train is coming in from Smolensk, and this will call the

Russian good temper into play. There are criminals from all parts, especially from the European parts, brought here to start on their way for Siberia. We must not imagine that there are more criminals in Russia than in other lands; but when one sees the scourings of seventy millions of people brought together at one place, one fears the badness of man. Why do they make so much fuss over robbers and murderers in Russia, if not to hand them over to the executioner?

"Because," a Russian would reply, "in Russia life is not esteemed so low as elsewhere."

To go further, the criminal is allowed to take wife and children, and their expenses are defrayed for the long journey by the State, to utilize them, as it were, for the manure of civilization for future races.

Formerly they went on foot, but now they come from all points of the compass by train to Moscow, and only go to spend the night in the old "Duma." Their belongings come on by cart. There seems to be a certain friendliness between the prisoners and the soldiers guarding them. Those in high places have ordained the Russian shall be a soldier, and that against his will and inclination; but he is a trustworthy soldier, and never ceases to be a good-tempered human being. If anyone doubt this, just see how he makes a collection for the prisoners in his big cap, and you will see how the rich merchant will stretch his ring-covered hand to give the soldiers a handful of 50-copeck pieces; the poor broom-seller will give his "mite" for the "unfortunate" (the people always call the condemned unfortunate!), and perhaps this is half of his little all. The fruit-seller gives to the children in the carts, and the tea-maker, who walks round with a samovar, brings life again to the women with a cup of tea. Even school-children offer their breakfast roll on the altar of charity.

The social problem will be very easy to solve when the

rich are all gentle and the poor submissive. Yes, if only there were not so many drones in the hive. Just by the university corner stands such a drone—who lives on the superstitions of others. He is a *kaldun.* He would make a very good model for a painter of the "wandering Jew." Apparently he is on a pilgrimage to some holy place, or some celebrated monastery, and is collecting for this purpose alms which he will spend like a real cynical epicurean in vodka at the next inn.

He cures all diseases of men and animals by promise, and sells relics he has made himself. In drink-shops, away in the country, he does what he pleases, but here, among pious people, he behaves circumspectly. He walks piously through the holy city, and makes the sign of the cross when he gets to the Kremlin, and stands before the statue of the Redeemer, over the Spaszky Gate, murmurs a curse under his breath against a rival he has just caught sight of, a discharged soldier, who passes by wrapped in his grey cloak, with his cap pulled over his eyes in humility.

There is scarcely a house in Moscow, in literary and professional circles, which you can enter without being pressed to join in a meal. If you call when your friends are at table you may be certain that you will not be ushered into a deserted drawing-room, where the master and mistress of the house will interview you in turn. In Moscow, instead of giving you this bitter-sweet welcome, your friends will receive you frankly, and beg you to sit down to table with them—in fact before the invitation is tendered a place will have been laid by their servants. If you have already dined you will be pressed to take dessert or coffee, and the mistress of the house will not offer excuses for the menu, however simple, you may be sure of that. The Russians live simply and openly. There is no question of elegant exteriors and hidden skeletons.

"St Petersburg is the head, Moscow is the stomach," said a Russian writer. That may be, but the simple hospitality of Moscow is by no means a bar to intellectual interests; on the contrary, this genial reception into the family circle is a safe way of prolonging the visit, and the conversation is sure to be a good deal more interesting than in ordinary drawing-rooms. There are no doubt some exceptions, and here and there one may find bad mannered and inhospitable people, just as one will find indiscreet guests. There is no fixed hour for meals, so that if one is making a round of visits one may be present at dinner various times. In other countries, one can pretty well tell at what hour all the families in the State will be at table, and so it is easy to avoid that special hour; not so in Moscow, where every one chooses his own hour, where the set rules which regulate Western life are unknown, and the people are simple, expansive, and natural.

A Russian drawing-room is not stiffly furnished, with chairs forming a semi-circle round the hearth, inviting the visitor to enter into a general conversation as cold as it is commonplace. The rooms are very large, and are not cumbered with furniture; Russians being confined to their houses for six months, the rooms are naturally built much larger than in other countries.

Small groups of chairs, arm-chairs, and divans are scattered over it, and green plants are a necessary feature of the room. If you want a *tête-à-tête*, you find a cosy divan; if you want an animated discussion with two or three persons, you establish yourself at a small round table; you can speak and discuss with passionate enthusiasm without interfering with anyone, and without fear of giving offence to the mistress of the house by showing interest in the subject under discussion. In a polished, elegant, levelling French or English drawing-room, a spark of enthusiasm is out of place, but a Russian drawing-

room makes for sincerity, for thought, and for passionate enthusiasm. You may move from group to group freely as though in your own home.

Russians are always ready to welcome their friends, it is inherent in their nature. If you part from them, they seem to forget you; you will see no sign of overwhelming sorrow, but when you return you will quickly see that they have not forgotten. Their natural apathy is the cause of their apparent coldness.

They have a special way of understanding the treatment due to a friend, which, though disconcerting at first, is very simple and natural once you understand it. In others countries there is always a tendency to make the visitor the centre of attraction, to give him the best place, the best bed, the best room, and the visitor, feeling that he is an inconvenience, cuts his visit short. In Russia, on the contrary, a visitor is looked upon as being temporarily one of the family, and is expected to act as such. The habits of the household are not suspended on his account: he is supposed to fall in with them. No one will graciously give up their bed to him, grumbling inwardly; there are always two or three vast divans in a Russian household and the guest will be installed on one of them. To sleep on a divan is no hardship to a Russian. The intimate life of the family will continue uninterrupted by the guest's presence, and when the latter is pressed to stay, he will feel that he can do so without inconveniencing anyone. He will get his fair share of the general comfort, but no member of the family will persecute him with embarrassing attentions.

When two Russians of the lower classes meet, they go to have a drink together; and when two of the upper classes meet, they play cards. Cards are a passion with Russians of the upper classes, without them they could not survive the dullness of the interminable winters.

Work, books, and dreams become tedious; whole nights are passed round the green table, with its candles and ash-trays, piled with the cardboard ends of *papirosses*. There is a break for a modest or luxurious supper and conversation: it is the only time that talking is allowed; during the game no one talks. Playing goes on till the morning. Those who are condemned to pass their winter in the country, have no other amusement but cards, but even in town whole nights are passed at the card-table. Respectable mothers of families will pass one or more nights a week, in this way, to say nothing of men.

Well-to-do Russians rarely speak of money. Though coming of families enriched by commerce, or even merchants themselves, they affect to forget financial matters as soon as they have crossed the threshold of their private dwellings. They never furnish the kind of details that Englishmen love to supply. If you speak of money, they turn the conversation into other channels, such as hunting or literature. Professors and minor officials are more communicative, but then every one knows the salary they receive. The professors are paid according to the number of hours they teach, which gives an advantage to those who have the strongest lungs or whose professional conscience is the most elastic; some of them give a total of thirty hours in the week. Then there are private lessons. Moscow is overrun by poor students and needy governesses, who will give lessons for fifty copecks and much less, but on the other hand some professors will ask as much as ten roubles the hour, and others eight or five.

Boarding-schools are not common in Russia, and parents who do not live in towns have to find families with whom their children may board. This is another source of income to professors.

The lives of minor officials are much the same in Russia as in the West, similar, above all, to that of their German

brothers, but they have not the same facilities for meeting together. Germans rarely receive their friends at home, they usually meet in the taverns; Russians, on the contrary, gladly throw open their houses to their friends; tea and rounds of sausage for refreshment and cards for amusement, is the programme and menu of these reunions.

The rich bourgeoisie live comfortably but without show; they keep open house, but a very simple table. Articles of luxury are costly but the necessaries of life no dearer than elsewhere. A family having an income of say 10,000 roubles does not consider this riches, and having no great display to make, devote their income to surrounding themselves with solid comfort. To keep a carriage is not considered in Moscow the sign of a large fortune; indeed families who do not live by any means luxuriously keep two or three carriages, and as many coachmen and horses.

Sometimes a young couple, not in the least given to ostentation or extravagance, having four little children will employ three nurses, a lady's-maid, a cook, two coachmen, a laundry-maid, and a moujik for the rough work. They can do this on an income of about 10,000 roubles. Other elderly couples, whose children are married and have left home, will keep as many as nine servants, but in other ways live a perfectly simple life, without any kind of show. To have such a large number of servants has its disadvantages; each one jealously keeps to his or her allotted portion of work, and then mistresses fall into the habit of doing nothing whatever for themselves. When travelling in other countries, they are amazed to see the domestic activity of mistresses of households. An idle, listless woman enjoys these semi-oriental customs, and spends her life eating sweetmeats or lying on soft divans, smoking the eternal *papiross*; they have never done any manual labour, and become excessively stout.

On the other hand an active woman reaps the advantage of this profusion of servants; the superintendence of her household and of them takes up a good deal of her time, but yet she is able to devote the rest of it to reading and the fine arts. In Russian society we find, therefore, two extremes—the result, we may suppose, of the numbers of servants—on one side, women suffering from incurable boredom, on the other, women whose intellectual activity leaves them no leisure.

Only the poor remain in town during the summer. Those persons whose business requires their presence in town, and those who have no country-house in the villages, take up their residence for two or three months in little chalets or *datshas* dotted over the forests in their neighbourhood. Under the pretence of seeking rest and fresh air, they expose themselves to all the inconveniences which ceaseless rain and early cold spells can occasion in a small, scarcely watertight house. There are whole towns of these *datshas*, fresh-air colonies so called, which are deserted eight or nine months of the year, and become very lively during the summer season. The rich Muscovite merchants, not content with these chalets, build themselves luxurious villas, perfect bijoux, dominating a height from which the view extends to the horizon over forests and pasture lands, through which a river winds its course between weeping willows. All the refinement of Western luxury may be seen in these villas, which form a striking contrast to the wild roads leading to them. Every room in the house, from the drawing-rooms to the humblest guest chamber, is furnished with exquisite taste, while round the villas the parks are scarcely cultivated, trees and bushes grow unhindered, and from the terrace one may watch the cattle grazing in the pasture lands beyond the river.

Other datshas, more modest but more typically Russian,

are large wooden houses with unplastered walls, the latter made of pine trunks, and varnished over with a light amber varnish ; the effect being curious and most charming. It is surprising that the Russians do not more often take advantage of this natural decoration, but the reason perhaps is, that these walls do not lend themselves to the conventional drawing-room ornamentation.

CHAPTER XVI

UNIVERSITIES AND STUDENTS

THE whole history of the higher education in Russia is the history of a fight against the foreign and inimical elements of Russian public life.

Even in the days of cruel reaction and slavery the universities were able to turn out a number of brilliant statesmen capable to hit a blow at serfdom and carry out the liberal forms of Alexander II. In the time of Nicholas I., when the censorship was very strict, and when every imprudent word created suspicion, the young men of Russia still heard about freedom, the professors explained by word of mouth what the Censor's pencil had blotted out. There was no forbidden scientific knowledge which the professors did not communicate to their students.

Among these professors were self-sacrificing men who spread the light of knowledge in the surrounding darkness. They remembered the gospel, " Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake," and many suffered persecution.

In the time of Nicholas I. the university students accepted the spirit of Ideal philosophy, so rudely opposed by the ruling classes.

At the accession of Alexander III. the doctrine of Auguste Comte was openly taught in lectures, although the works of the celebrated French philosopher were forbidden. Darwin and Spencer were also spoken of, which horrified the clergy, also all political and economical theories, no attention being paid to the Censor. Many professors of law made no secret of their sympathy

for constitutional reforms. The students said, with humour, of a certain professor, that " he killed two birds with one stone ; he proved the non-existence of God by the existence of the Russian State." All the universities were watched over by the eye of Katkow, who let no opportunity pass of denouncing professors who " demoralized the youth." Four of Melnik's professors were at different points deprived of their posts, yet in spite of that free speech was not killed. The professors did not look at what was allowed and what was forbidden, so much as at what seemed to them scientifically necessary.

Lectures were given on Marx. The universities, from the day of their foundation, had to fight against the attacks of all the reactionary forces, the clergy and the magistrates and newspapers. Some hundreds of professors now spoke openly who till then had kept silence, and most of these professors had been nominated by the State. Reaction did not succeed in tearing the banner of freedom from the hands of the professors, nor in killing the germs of scientific education, the chief merit of past and present professors.

What about the students ? They are harshly judged. There are those who see in the disturbances only contempt for knowledge and the externals of barbarism. Yet the students deserve sympathy. Even their failings are good qualities. We must lay stress on the practical idealism which makes Russian students incapable of compromise. The Russian student, with passionate inspiration, places himself in the service of the social ideal. He accepts the doctrines of Marx as a kind of religious belief ; and thereto hangs the self-sacrifice, the desire of martyrdom. No one can reproach him with want of boldness. The disturbances have resulted in arrests and banishment to the farthermost limits of Siberia. Yet punishment has not had the desired effect, but has

always called forth further disturbance. The sentiment of " unity " forces the students to demand the release of their brethren, and this demand always strikes the note of enduring strength. The radicalism of temperament speaks of the radicalism of political conviction. So they will never be satisfied with a moderate constitution: they demand the introduction of universal suffrage with equal rights, to vote secretly.

There is often talk of a social democratic republic. They remind one of the French Revolutionaries of the eighteenth century, with the same incapability of thinking *more geometrico*, the same dogmatism and belief in possibilities, and the same inclination to rebuild the realities and actualities of to-day on the principles of reason.

Even those among them who are evolutionists will not hear of the evolution of history. The inclination to dabble in abstractions, and the fashion of thinking with historical capability, are characteristic features of modern Russian society. Thought which has not been learnt in the school of self-control is not restrained by the facts of political experience, and the want of this control in thought makes itself felt in most of the students. They observe life from the standpoint of absolute perfection, yet at the same time will not recognize the relative values which the university is able to offer even in the present imperfect conditions. They demand certain reforms and ameliorations only. They will recognize no passage from absolute darkness to full light of day. That is why their judgment on mankind is so rough. Mankind for them is divided into two classes—heroes and rogues—and as they see no steps between these two extremes, they love or hate with passion; they have not the faculty of judging critically or of analysing calmly.

The professors suffer much from unjust judgment and

want of toleration. Here again it must not be forgotten that these faults are the reverse side of certain positive qualities, power and passion of conviction. Much can be forgiven them, for they love well. Their infatuations are always pure—boundless love for the people, love of liberty—they are ready to sacrifice everything.

The students of illegal students' unions, and the students of the high schools, are bound together by fraternity and college connexions in the name of liberty. And the unions have performed a service to Russian society, in teaching discipline and the suppression of the purely personal in the common cause. Representatives of *semstwos*, magistrates and professors all unite. There is a solidarity between the members and groups, and they form a kind of " Tugend-bund." This was started by the students, always to the front of any social movement, and they first aroused society.

The unjust reproach that the students despise learning is often made. They, in truth, despised the university teaching, but not learning. In this respect there is much exaggeration. The lecture-rooms of the talented professors are always over-crowded, and every word is followed with attention; and there is every possibility that the universities will flourish nobly when the storms and disturbances and the fight for political liberty are past. Then Russia may look forward to a grand and glorious future.

Therefore, whoever wishes to learn and form an opinion about the Russian student, must first of all fix his mind on the fact that the student of to-day in the empire of the Tsars is the outcome of the so-called " New Age," and hails from the days of investigations and principles and claims which run like a red thread since 1860 through the inner development of Russian society.

In those days the independent middle and smaller land-

owning classes, out of which the leading spirits of student life were recruited, were the principal elements.

Sir Mackenzie Wallace, in his excellent book on Russia, describes the type of student and his development from youth to his manhood of liberal opposition in later years as follows :

" Nicolai Ivan'vitsh is a tall, slender man, about sixty years of age, with emaciated face, bilious complexion, and long black hair, evidently a person of excitable, nervous temperament. When he speaks he articulates rapidly, and uses more gesticulation than is common among his countrymen. His favourite subject of conversation, or rather of discourse, for he more frequently preaches than talks, is the lamentable state of the country and the worthlessness of the Government. Against the Government he has a great many causes for complaint, one or two of them of a personal kind.

" In 1861 he was a student in the University of St Petersburg. At that time there was a great deal of public excitement all over Russia, and especially in the capital. The serfs had just been emancipated, and other important reforms had been undertaken. There was a general conviction among the younger generation—and it must be added among many older men—that the autocratic, paternal system of government was at an end, and that Russia was about to be re-organized according to the most advanced principles of political and social science. The students, sharing this conviction, wished to be freed from all academical authority and to organize a kind of academic self-government. They desired especially the right of holding public meetings for the discussion of their common affairs. The authorities would not allow this, and issued a list of rules prohibiting meetings and raising the class-fees, so as practically to exclude many of the poorer students. This was felt to be a wanton insult to

the spirit of the new era. In spite of the prohibition, indignation meetings were held, and fiery speeches made by male and female orators, first in the class-rooms, and afterwards in the courtyard of the university. On one occasion a long procession marched through the principal streets to the house of the curator. Never had such a spectacle been seen before in St Petersburg. Timid people feared that it was the commencement of a revolution, and dreamed about barricades. At last the authorities took energetic measures: about 300 students were arrested, and of these thirty-two were expelled from the university.

"Among those who were expelled was Nicolai Ivan'itsh. All his hopes of becoming a professor, as he had intended, were thereby shipwrecked, and he had to look out for some other profession. A literary career now seemed the most promising, and certainly the most congenial to his tastes. It would enable him to gratify his ambition of being a public man, and give him opportunities of attacking and annoying his persecutors. He had already written occasionally for one of the leading periodicals, and now he became a regular contributor. His stock of positive knowledge was not very large, but he had the power of writing fluently, and of making his readers believe that he had an unlimited store of political wisdom which the press-censor prevented him from publishing. Besides this, he had the talent of saying sharp, satirical things about those in authority, in such a way that even a press censor could not easily raise objections. Articles written in this style were sure at that time to be popular, and his had a very great success. He became a known man in literary circles, and for a time all went well. But gradually he became less cautious, whilst the authorities became more vigilant. Some copies of a violent seditious proclamation fell into the hands of the

police, and it was generally believed that the document proceeded from the coterie to which he belonged. From that moment he was carefully watched, till one night he was unexpectedly roused from his sleep by a gendarme and conveyed to the fortress.

"When a man is arrested in this way for a real or supposed political offence, there are two modes of dealing with him: he may be tried before a regular tribunal, or he may be dealt with by 'administrative procedure' (*administrativnym poryadkom*). In the former case he will, if convicted, be condemned to imprisonment for a certain term; or if the offence be of a graver nature, he may be transported to Siberia, either for a fixed period or for life. By the administrative procedure he is simply removed without a trial to some distant town, and compelled to live there under police supervision during his Majesty's pleasure. Nicolai Ivan'itsh was treated 'administratively,' because the authorities, though convinced that he was a dangerous character, could not find sufficient evidence to procure his conviction before a court of justice. For five years he lived under police supervision, in a small town near the White Sea, and then one day he was informed, without any explanation, that he might go and live anywhere he pleased except in St Petersburg and Moscow.

"Since that time he has lived with his brother, and spends his time in brooding over his grievances and bewailing his shattered illusions. He has lost none of that fluency which gained him an ephemeral literary reputation, and can speak by the hour on political and social questions to anyone who will listen to him. It is extremely difficult, however, to follow his discourses, and utterly impossible to retain them in the memory. They belong to what may be called political metaphysics, for though he professes to hold metaphysics in abhorrence, he is himself a thorough

metaphysician in his modes of thought. He lives, indeed, in a world of abstract conceptions, in which he can scarcely perceive concrete facts, and his arguments are always a kind of clever juggling with such equivocal, conventional terms as aristocracy, bourgeoisie, monarchy, and the like.

"At concrete facts he arrives, not directly by observation, but by deductions from general principles, so that his facts can never by any possibility contradict his theories. Then he has certain axioms which he tacitly assumes, and on which all his arguments are based; as for instance, that everything to which the term 'Liberal' can be applied must necessarily be good at all times and under all conditions.

"Among a mass of vague conceptions which it is impossible to reduce to any clearly defined form he has a few ideas which are perhaps not strictly true, but which are at least intelligible. Among these is his conviction that Russia has let slip a magnificent opportunity of distancing all Europe on the road of progress. She might, he thinks, at the time of the emancipation, have boldly accepted all the most advanced principles of political and social science, and have completely reorganized the political and social structure in accordance with them. Other nations could not take such a step, because they are old and decrepit, filled with stubborn hereditary prejudices, and cursed with an aristocracy and a bourgeoisie; but Russia is young, knows nothing of social castes, and has no deep-rooted prejudices to contend with. The population is like potter's clay, which can be made to assume any form that science may recommend. Alexander II. began a magnificent sociological experiment, but he stopped halfway. Some day, he believes, the experiment will be completed, but not by the autocratic power. In his opinion, autocracy is 'played out,' and must give way to parliamentary institutions. For him a constitution is

a kind of omnipotent fetish. You may try to explain to him that a parliamentary regime, whatever its advantages may be, necessarily produces political parties and political conflicts, and is not nearly so suitable for grand sociological experiments as a good paternal despotism. You may try to convince him that, though it may be difficult to convert an autocrat, it is infinitely more difficult to convert a House of Commons. But all your efforts will be in vain. He will assure you that a Russian parliament would be something quite different from what parliaments commonly are. It would contain no parties, for Russia has no social castes, and would be guided entirely by scientific considerations, as free from prejudice and personal influences as a philosopher speculating on the nature of the Infinite! In short, he evidently imagines that a national parliament would be composed of himself and his friends, and that the nation would calmly submit to their ukases as it has hitherto submitted to the ukases of the Tsars.

"Pending the advent of this political millennium, when unimpassioned science is to reign supreme, Nicolai Ivan'itsh allows himself the luxury of indulging in some very decided political animosities, and he hates with the fervour of a fanatic. Firstly and chiefly, he hates what he calls the bourgeoisie: he is obliged to use the French word, because his native language does not contain an equivalent term, and especially capitalists of all sorts and dimensions. Next he hates aristocracy, especially a form of aristocracy called Feudalism. To these abstract terms he does not attach a very precise meaning, but he hates the entities which they are supposed to represent quite as heartily as if they were personal enemies. Among the things which he hates in his own country, the autocratic power holds the first place. Next, as an emanation from the autocratic power, come the *tchinovniks*, and especially

the gendarmes. Then come the landed proprietors. Though he is himself a landed proprietor, he regards the class as cumberers of the ground, and thinks that all their land should be confiscated and distributed among the peasantry.

"All proprietors have the misfortune to come under his sweeping denunciations, because they are inconsistent with the ideal of a peasant empire, but he recognizes amongst them degrees of depravity. Some are simply obstructive, whilst others are actively prejudicial to the public welfare."

The present generation of students has grown up under the influence of men like Nicolai Ivan'itsh, and the average representative student is exactly like him, but the social standing of the students has changed since the "liberal age." Then the great majority of academic youth was recruited from the middle class and from small land-owners and officials, as well as from the sons of the learned professions—if not from the highest, at least from good society. To-day the sons of priests (popes), peasants, and tradespeople preponderate. During the last twenty-five years the beginnings of a middle class in town and village have sprung up, and in spite of the difficulties which the re-organization of the Education Department by Count Dmitri Tolstoi has placed in the way of the youth desirous of entering the university, they have not been able to prevent children of the people flocking to the seven universities, Warsaw included. The nobility also send those of their sons who are not destined to a military career, to the university, so that they may be prepared to occupy the higher positions in statesmanship; but these are to be found almost exclusively in Moscow or St Petersburg, and form, with but few exceptions, a party to themselves, and pass their time outside the lecture-halls, in their narrow and elegant home-circles, and take

very little interest in things appertaining to student life. A very strong contingent of male and female students is drawn from the independent landowning and educated classes, and among these are found the leaders, the most restless spirits, the Nicolai Ivan'itshes of to-day. The great mass of students come from the lower orders. The term " lower " is to be understood to represent also the middle and lower trading world under officialdom, the lower country clergy, and the education officials of lower schools, whose social position in Russia is sharply divided from real society. Hundreds of young people flock to the university towns who have only so far enjoyed a very superficial education in the schools and colleges and clerical seminaries of provincial towns. In the country they go to the high schools, science and technical institutes, with the intention of gaining further development to fit themselves for the learned and practical professions. To these are joined the Jews and the foreign nations in the south of the empire, and particularly countless Jewesses from Poland and South Russia, who throng to the courses given in the girls' high schools. These form the Radical element. The numbers of students during the last decade of the nineteenth century have increased tremendously. Moscow had over 4500 in the beginning of 1901; St Petersburg over 3600; Kiev, about 2100; Warsaw, 2000; Charkoff and Odessa from 1500 to 1800, and Kasan something over 1000. There is no doubt that the desire for knowledge is the main motive which drives these young people to the university, for they throw themselves heart and soul into natural science and social political studies. " Sociology " is the study which attracts them most. The majority of them do not only desire to gain bread or power in the future, but before everything they desire to serve the " Fatherland," to reform the " poor people," and to spread the

"New Life" throughout Russia. There is a certain ideal strain running through these young strugglers which represents a great deal of natural intelligence, and a certain amount of pathos is apparent in their praiseworthy efforts. But in consequence of the unripe development of an education without system, which leaves so much to be desired, and also because of the peculiar character of the Slavs, which misleads them so often, this ideal is the destruction of many who deserve a better fate. These students do not fail in zealous work, and if one considers under what difficult circumstances the majority seek to satisfy their thirst for knowledge, one must esteem their energy. And truly social and political fancies are not the only cause of their destruction: many are ruined solely by starvation. Unlike the undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge, and other English and American universities, the majority of Russian students are very poor. Thousands of Russian students are absolutely without means of any description, and keep body and soul together by giving a few lessons, and it takes a great deal of perseverance to carry on the struggle undeterred under such wretched conditions. It is easy to conceive that these conditions lead those least capable of resistance to a radicalism which recognizes no limits to good or evil, to a state of revolt against the existing order of things which is not always the result of meditation and reflection, but of an empty stomach and a bitter spirit.

Typical of Russian academical youth is the student life of Moscow; so I will describe their conduct on the two high festivals of the university there. A better judgment of the social life will be obtained by this than by any extensive character-drawing.

In November of each year the students of Moscow are visibly excited; the season of the ball is approaching, and the many preparations for this event are being carried

out. The question of toilet is discussed in families, and committees of students on pleasure bent prepare many wonderful surprises for this ball. It is reported that the students have been able to raise the five hundred roubles required by the insurance of the House of Assembly of the Nobles against the certain damages, which are broken panes and mirrors, damaged tables and chairs, " forgotten " fees for toilet rooms, and tips for the officials, etc. The *kupishikhas* (the wives of the rich tradespeople) become cooler day by day in their relations with the students, who take situations in the house to teach the children, then dismiss them just before the ball. At last the great day arrives, and towards evening a veritable stream of people goes towards the House of Assembly of the Nobles, which possesses the largest halls in Moscow, and which is taken for the students' ball. Such a ball in 1880 is described by an eye-witness. He put on his dress clothes and took with him an opera hat, but he was soon made aware that evening dress was purely optional. As he entered the Assembly House, at about half-past nine, the ball was then in full swing, and he remarked with astonishment that the extraordinary contradictions, always noticeable among the Moscow students, were here present, and very visible in their dress. Indeed he saw the son of an old noble family, as well as a few foreigners, in the complete ball costume known to Western Europe, while close by were the sons of tradesmen in coats something like caftans, with light or dark trousers, but the majority of students wore the usual German costume with coloured blouse or joppe. Some of the sons of the Muses even swaggered about in the national peasant's dress and shirt, in high water-boots —and the neck-ties left nothing to be desired in variety. The ladies were on the average dressed to a higher standard than the gentlemen, and among them were women of the

higher, middle, and small nobility, and also some plutocrats, but here and there were some who would never have been seen in a dream of beauty, also some small, doubtful, little plants. Among the enormous crowd—estimated about six or seven thousand people—this would only be noticed by a keen observer.

In the first ball-room, till midnight, good society predominated. In the large hall, from which the doors with mirrors leading to the other rooms stood wide open, people danced to the splendid music of the orchestra; in the other rooms, in which were buffets with sweets and refreshments of all kinds, the people who did not dance walked about, and at some tables, particularly in the farther room, many of the guests were sitting, men and women together with whole parties of students, particularly those who were not accustomed to drawing-rooms. He watched the joyous coming and going in the great hall, which seemed very much like any ordinary dance, and then he began to wander through the other rooms. In the long narrow room which runs along one side of the big ball-room, and forms as it were a kind of *foyer*, a Russian student, Count W., came up to him and whispered softly, after greeting him in a friendly manner, begging him carefully to observe a stately figure with fair beard, a hooked nose, and very carefully dressed, leaning against a pillar in the ball-room.

"The cursed police must spy everywhere. He is a member of the Secret Police: I know him well."

"My Russian friend," the author continues, "drew my attention to the several doubtful-looking people who, as far as supervision went, were behaving in a perfectly harmless manner, and were only recognized by those initiated into the mysteries of secret service. Count W., who lived in Moscow and knew every one, assured me that all the 'Society' of the 'City of the Tsars' was present;

it seemed to be the right thing to do to go to this ball, he said, just to show yourselves for a short while and then to disappear, leaving the field—when the society began to be mixed—to the student element with their belongings. In fact, soon after eleven o'clock we perceived, having been once round the rooms and returned to the vestibule, that the ladies and gentlemen of the 'great world' were going away in batches, taking with them the late-comers, up the broad, lion-crowned marble staircase."

As he again passed through the rooms to get to a buffet in the further room, he met two ladies whose striking costumes proclaimed them to be the wives of tradespeople from the millionaire's district. One, long and thin, with black hair and sparkling dark eyes, showed signs of faded beauty in her piquante face; the other, whose fair wig was powdered with gold dust, and whose thick lips were undeniably sensual, was very stout and was using her eyeglass effectively. Both women were *décolleté*, covered with gold and diamonds, and they seemed to sample carefully every student who passed them from head to foot, as if they were looking for some one, or else as if they were market-women looking for good wares. As he approached these ladies, they were standing still and watching a stately, poorly clad, fair student, from head to foot, through their glasses, so that the handsome youth, obviously straight from his village home, was quite perturbed. "If the world were not topsy-turvy I should say, 'The sultanas at the man-market,'" he remarked. "And you would be quite right," answered Count W., with a sneer. "To-day is the day on which our *kuptshikhas* (wives of rich tradesmen) look for their children's tutors, whom they also use as supplements to their better halves; and some poor fellow, driven by hunger into the arms of these vampires, is obliged to keep this position for a year, and only splendid figures find favour in their

eyes. You see Catharine II. and Elizabeth were educated amongst us!" The visitor then saw the two women entangle the fair peasant boy in conversation and lead him to a window seat, then he continued his walk through the rooms.

The buffet then claimed his attention for some time, and it was midnight before he again returned to join the company.

Everything was changed. Evening dress and the elegant toilets had disappeared from the picture, and the couples which he had formerly noticed keeping to the background in an endless, unconstrained whirl were now resting in the ball-room, and he got an impression that alcohol was already doing its deadly work. In the long *foyer* a group of students had formed who wanted to try to dance the national dance *Kasatshjok*, in the midst of shrieking and screaming, to the tones of a concertina. The loud laughter, the orchestra, and the concertina, calling and shrieking blended together into one overwhelming, ear-piercing, discordant noise; and as he tried to escape to the distant rooms, he was met by "Gaudeamus igitur" from a thousand throats. A great number of students, male and female, had placed several tables together and sat round, glasses of punch and bottles of *schnaps* in hand, and sang "Gaudeamus igitur" with a Russian accent all the time, and repeated perpetually the verse which runs "Vivat et respublica," striking the table with their fists or glasses. Several pale and half-starved students sat in a corner in eager conversation with a female student, and did not trouble themselves at all about the noise. Their eyes sparkled, and they flourished their arms with passion. As he passed by he heard one say, "And I tell you, Lassalle solved the great problem: all the others are muddlers!"

"Yes," remarked Count W., sneering; "they do not

forget sociology and philosophy even on the night of the ball, and they solve the highest problems waving their hands, while the orgies of the Cancan go on round them. How different from the students in other capitals, how different from the football-playing, flirting English student, or the love-making student of Paris—with his *grisette* and his *faire la noce.*

In a little room at the end of the long row of rooms, there was an old man with coiled hair and long beard, standing on a table, while students thronged thickly around him. He was making a speech, in which he threw around him words like the following:

"Freedom for science." "The right of spontaneity for the individual." "The foundations of Russian life." "The inexhaustible limit of the Mind of the Russian people." And so on. By this time the visitor had had enough and he turned towards home or rather towards salvation in some quiet place from this nerve-disturbing tumult. Count W. looked at his watch and said:—

"Let us stay a quarter of an hour longer, the kissing must begin soon!"

The other asked if this was unavoidable, and he replied coolly that such was the case. When "Fidelitas" is at its highest point, they all drink "Brotherhood," then there is some misunderstanding and the drubbing begins. If we step into the vestibule now, we shall see that the police, in expectation of what will follow, have already moved forward in numbers. But as the visitor did not wish to assist any further, they left the House of Assembly of the Nobles. After some days he heard that things had gone so well that "only" seventeen arrests had been made, but "unfortunately" the guarantee of 500 roubles for the damages had not quite sufficed!

The second most important day in the life of the

Moscow student is the 25th (or according to the Old Style the 12th) of January. This is the day on which the foundation of the University is celebrated—all conventions are done away with—the differences of position, fortune, or point of view cease, and professors, old gentlemen, and students form one large family, and all Moscow, male and female, takes part in it. The feast of Saint Tatjana is so characteristic of the peculiarity of the Moscow student, as of Moscow life in general, that no one can give any verdict on it who has not lived this day there. A Russian author gives a faithful picture of such a feast in a novel entitled " Kitai-Gorod," that I cannot avoid giving a description based on some passages here.

In the foreground of the persons stood the hero of the novel, the nobleman Paltussow, who after long years of wandering has come to Moscow in order to pursue the ideals of modern capitalism, and his friend and former fellow-student, Ivan Alexejewith Piroshkow, who has been going to pass his examination for years, but has never done so. One morning, as Paltussow is leaving a restaurant after breakfast, and is just about going to get into his sleigh, some one calls to him :

" Where are you going ? "

Paltussow turns round, " Ah, Piroshkow," he cries gladly.

Ivan Alexejewith, in his unavoidable high hat and his coat with Astrakhan collar, smiles pleasantly. His glasses shine brightly in the sun, and his round cheeks are red with the cold.

" Come with me. I shall not let you go ! " he said, at the same time holding Paltussow by the button hole, according to his custom.

" Where ? "

" Unhappy man ! How could any one ask to-day where ? Don't you know what day this is ? "

"Truly I don't," said Paltussow, who by the way was really pleased at this rencontre.

"You must really be enlightened! To-day is the Tatjana Day, little father! The 12th!"

"I had quite forgotten!" Paltussow was not at his ease.

"That comes of associating with tradespeople! You have forgotten the Foundation Day of your own University!"

"Yes, I had forgotten!"

Paltussow wrinkled his forehead; he had two business calls to make; but he could put them off for the University festival.

They drove to the University, and as both were in good humour, they chatted together until they arrived at the courtyard of the University. Paltussow saw a long row of carriages, among them that of the Bishop, with an outrider in fur cap and blue caftan. He was sorry that his studies had been interrupted; he had studied here for three years for nothing: he might have been a Fellow by this time; he had chosen another path in life, and had no longer to strive for that to which the "Kitai-Gorod" (the City of Moscow) and its inhabitants wished to entice him.

"Alma Mater!" Piroshkow cried in fun, as he descended from the sleigh, but a certain pathos could be distinguished in his voice.

"Good day, Leonty," Paltussow greeted the University porter in the dark passage where their steps made the iron plates ring.

They did not take their coats off here, but upstairs where a crowd of people was already in the ante-room. Here Paltussow also greeted the porter, a thin old man in blue livery with a parade scarf. He was touched. Never before had the University roused in him such feelings!

In the first hall—they went through the library—were the greatcoats of the guests already arrived. Gentlemen in blue uniforms passed them by—the wide gold lace of the generals shone among the white uniforms of civil officials. A thick-set man stood in the window; his hair was long and disappeared under his embroidered collar. He had the Wladimir Order round his neck, and he argued loudly with a thin, bloodless young man in evening dress. The beardless old face of the beadle showed itself in the doorway and recalled to Paltussow's mind different scenes which had taken place in the ante-room, meetings and days of excitement.

Piroshkow had taken his arm, and as they passed with some difficulty to some disengaged chairs, they bowed to acquaintances here and there.

The semicircular corridor with columns was full of students, many ladies being also present. Paltussow recognized a certain expression of glad excitement on some faces; people whispered here and there that the Rector himself would speak, and that from beginning to end he would say what every one expected. It would be applauded, for the time had come when at last the Russian University should also come into her own.

They sang a hymn, then a professor made a speech; few could hear it, and it did not call forth any interest. Then the Rector made his statement. His feeble voice died away through the hall, but not a single word was lost, and gained due applause. Paltussow and Piroshkow looked round and clapped their hands, nodded and called out. Both were in uncommon good spirits. Paltussow did not see any known faces among the students, but he felt one with them. He was so happy, and had forgotten all about bankers and brokers and merchants. There was a tradesman's wife there—he knew her; her husband sat by her side with a sullen face. Paltussow did not

join them; many miles now lay between him and them. His friend Piroshkow amused him with his smiles. His sharp eyes and his *bonhomie* seemed something fine, educated, good, and strange to all "business." The word "business" throbbed in Paltussow's brain. There was more applause, and stronger this time. Every one talked to every one, strangers grasped each other by the hand. "Good," "Excellent," shouted the students standing round. The faces of the young girls, for there were some quite young ones present, glowed with joy. They also stood for something in the rights of the University, and they knew also who were the friends and who were the foes of the venerable walls where one learned the truth, and how to work, and where one became enthusiastic for other things than bread.

"Where are you going?" asked Piroshkow of a young man in high boots; "surely not to church? Come with us."

"To the Hermitage?"

"Yes."

"Shall we drive there?" asked Paltussow.

"To-day there is only one road to the Hermitage, and then on to Streljna!"

Paltussow nodded his head and saw himself once again in the hall, which was quickly emptying, with the cathedrals and pictures and the golden numbers on the dark velvet. . . .

A two-horse vehicle, taken by some member of the Merchants' Club, was driven quickly to the Triumphal Arch. The sleigh covered with red cloth swung over the ditches in the Twerskaja and Jamskaja Streets, and the fine snow shone in the rising moon. Paltussow and Piroshkow drove with a professor of languages from Little Russia to Streljna. The speeches he had heard buzzed though his brain. A good many young people, of which two-

thirds were students, had met there. The speeches, toasts, and good wishes began with the soup. They drank healths in everything available, in red wine, sherry, and afterwards in beer.

At the beginning they sang the "Gaudeamus" in unison, and then went on with Russian songs. Then a babble began out of which nothing could be made. A deputation of students went into an ante-room, where several professors were dining, and brought two of them back with them. One was a thin, grey-headed man with spectacles, the other a dark man, very young but uncommonly fat. They had to make speeches—the fat one laughed, groaned, and flew into the air like a bolster, and prayed to be spared. His companion in distress bore it all stoically.

Paltussow and Piroshkow took part also in these jokes, which were repeated again and again. Several professors were called and desired to make speeches. All sorts of questions were asked them; they were kissed and *tutoyé'd*.

In the corridor there was a row with the servants; it was time to return to the air.

"How do you feel, gentlemen?" asked the professor, and they went down the drive; "do your ears ring?"

"Not mine!" said Paltussow, "which I regret!"

"We shall overtake it again in Streljna" said Piroshkow; "one cannot be temperate there; it is contrary to tradition."

"Restauratio est mater studiosorum!" said the professor, laughing. He shut his little Russian eyes against the wind. "Automedon, drive on!" he shouted to the coachman.

"Let classical obscurity perish!"

"Bravo, philologer!" cried Paltussow.

Truly his head did not buzz much, although he had

drunk "brotherhood" with some ten young men, all entirely unknown to him. One of them took him into a corner behind a pillar; they dined in the new white hall, and asked him:

"Have you lost your conscience? Do you still believe in principles?"

That had been said by a drunken student, but Paltussow had been unpleasantly touched by the words; he assured the student that he placed the University before all things, that he should never forget that one cannot judge man according to results, but that the times were bad and one must reserve one's force.

"Times are bad," you are right, cried the student, and his eyes became very small. He supported himself with both hands on Paltussow's shoulders, and cried suddenly, "Who are you? Can I talk to you? Or are you a spy?"

Now he was driving along in the fresh air, but his mind was occupied with this drunken student for the whole drive. There was a something indefinable which made his cheeks red and his skin prickly in spite of his not having drunk much wine—something like a sudden "Memento Mori."

The coachman forced on the horses, the sleigh drove into the courtyard of Strejlna; behind them came two carriages harnessed with three horses. Noisily they all left the sleigh, quarrelled with the drivers, and gave them tips. A drunken man was led; two hummed street songs.

It was very hot in the ante-room and the coat pegs were all full; a perfect chaos met them, a chaos of speech, songs, twanging of guitars, laughter, screams, and the tones of women's voices.

"Saint Tatjana! Overcome the festival." Some one called from the doorway. Two of the carousers then seized hold of the professor of languages and carried him

along with them to a separate room. Paltussow and Piroshkow went into the common room. Tobacco smoke rose in clouds, and the odour of punch overcame all other odours.

Faces, figures, clothes, men's beards, and the dresses of the women harpists, all were drowned in a smoky, moving mass. They were drinking at all the tables; a robust man, with Kalmuck eyes, was dancing in evening dress with unbuttoned waistcoat. Some men walked about, embraced each other, and kissed. A handsome, well-grown dark man sat with a harpist in a coloured jacket and embroidered skirt; he pressed her hand and made as if to kiss her. Some one in the hall was singing a well-known street song.

"Let us get away from here," said Piroshkow; "I cannot bear this nonsense any longer."

They looked for acquaintances and found none. They wished to drink, for the day would not otherwise be a success.

"Gentlemen, Vivat Academia! Allow me to introduce myself."

They were addressed in these words by a gentleman of very slight academic appearance, who might have been about fifty years old, with short grey hair and badly shaved cheeks, in a uniform which looked much like a lawyer's of old days. He had a glass of wine in his hand, and pressed Paltussow to take it. Paltussow looked at Piroshkow.

"One student to another!" the man declared, in a tipsy but fairly strong voice, reeling a little at the same time.

"You were a student?" the two friends both said at once.

"Let us sit down with him," Paltussow whispered to Piroshkow.

"You are alone?" inquired Piroshkow.

"I do not see any of my fellow-students; I am old, and was late at dinner—another glass, please!"

"No," answered Paltussow, "drink punch with us; there, in the corner, we will sit down."

They examined their new companion with curiosity. It was all one to them with whom they spent the day. He told them he had also studied there, and that was good enough for anyone.

"Are you a lawyer?" Paltussow asked, when the punch was ready.

"Naturally! and served in the police administration. Then I got into the Government. In the police, in the financial department, there are worse things than that."

"And now?" Piroshkow listened and drank.

"And now? Well, now I am bailiff in the Court of the Justice of the Peace, and I thank God for it. I never thought of that, when I was a colleague with Nikita Iwanich."

"Do you remember him?"

The "bailiff" so they called him, shut his eyes, emptied his glass, and nodded his head.

"Of course, I remember him," said the bailiff, raising his glass, and thereby spilling the punch. "I had five with a cross! That is all finished!" His voice was thick with tears. "Ah, time has passed since then. Is he remembered with honour? No! People abuse him now—just as those over there, with the musicians. But I am not like that; I learnt only what was right and just of Nikita Iwanich."

He spoke with a northern accent.

"Justitia!" said Paltussow.

"Now listen, I will describe him to you. I see him as if he were still alive and sitting before me." He climbed on to the lecturer's chair, took a pinch of snuff:

"'He! he!' Do you remember that? 'He! he! Gentlemen, to-day's lecture we will devote to compulsory service—ah! he! he! an excellent institution!'"

"Just like him!" Paltussow called out, and struck the bailiff on the shoulder.

"Like him? I know it is like him—I hear it often in the Government offices—an excellent institution. There were different kinds of compulsory service. Servitus ligni immittendi—ah? to fix a beam in the neighbour's partition wall. To make your vent-hole for smoke on the neighbour's side, ah?—the smoke-hole! a common wall. He, he, he! Servitus balnearii habendi—to go to a neighbour's house with the *Badequaste*—Servitus luminis, servitus prospectus. Light Sun, for all—ah? I am a Roman, I am a free citizen! You may not take the view away from me! I wish to enjoy the sight of the sea—and the setting sun! Ah? but the Russian is not free, he is oppressed. He does not know his obligations. I walk along the Moscow River, ah! I wish to gaze upon the Kremlin—he! he!—impossible—a house prevents me, a house prevents me. A speculating builder has built it! he, he. Eques—the knight!—and I cannot, because I am a Russian—a tedious, ruined man!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the two friends. They drew nearer to the bailiff; Paltussow got very merry. He had discovered that the lectures of this whimsical fellow whom the bailiff had just imitated were full of strength and life. As if in answer to his thought the bailiff said:

"Have you ever grasped what an artist he was? What talent! I understood it. The others were all babes in tight trousers, and told just stupid anecdotes, laughed like donkeys, and shouted in public-houses. He gave me "two" once. He said thou to the students at examinations. An Armenian with a feeble head from the East, called out to him once: "You must not say 'thou' to me!

I will not put up with it!" He rallied him afterwards with, 'A man from the East has insulted me.' He, he! The Armenians also are described in history. The Romans beat them in any century at Tigranocerta or elsewhere. God give him a happy end!"

The bailiff's eyes were full of tenderness. The memory of his favourite professor, whose voice and manners he copied so successfully, excited him. The listeners were pleased.

Now, "another lecture," he said, rocking his chair, "on 'Entail.'"

"On what?" asked Piroshkow.

"On Entail," repeated the bailiff. "A clever arrangement, says the casuist, but how he described it!—he described this institution strikingly. It was like a novel, a picture of living men! Yes, he was an artist."

"Sirs, there was once a proconsul, Lentulus—he, he, he!—he carried on the government in Egypt, and he stole for himself." He then put his hand with characteristic gesture into his pocket. "Stole very much, and kept dancing women—he, he!—there were beautiful dancing women in Egypt! Children were born into the world, but what he stole he divided with Augustus—he, he! He grew old, the children must be provided for. He wrote to Cæsar, 'Rogo, precor, deprecor, fidei tuæ committo. I gave up to you all that I stole. You deceiver!—Do not afflict my children. I ask the honour, I believe, you, fidei committo.' That is how this institution arose—he, he!" He interrupted himself. "Are you also a lawyer?" he asked Paltussow.

"No, I was a student of natural history."

They kept silent. In the hall and the rooms the drunken noise still continued. The rhymes of the songs were sung in chorus. A gipsy sang with a loud voice.

"But the Lieutenant has decided to remit five hundred strokes! Heissa!" Some ten voices shouted "Heissa!"

"Things have not gone well with me since I left the Alma Mater. 'Remit' Fine civilization that! Not Roman, if even service. I should like to go and say: 'You are offending my ears! You shameless fellows!' They should really choose songs worthy of mankind— What? Are you drunk? I have also been drinking, and certainly not less than you, but I will have no 'Heissa remit.' What Heissa? Strokes, ah, you Tartars, you Slavs, you servants from head to heel, as if we are not worth more than five hundred strokes?"

"Let them be," said Paltussow, quietening him.

"Shall we toast, comrade! You have pleasant odours, but I smell of the court-house! All the same we drink! Pereat stultitia pereant osores!"

The punch was not yet finished and the conversation went on without any coherence. Every one reeled, and the vapour enveloped drinkers and dancers; kisses and embraces threatened to end in blows.

The return to the town began, carriages with one, two, or three horses drove in the direction of the Triumphal Arch. Paltussow and Piroshkow supported their new acquaintance. He had held himself together, but grew weak in the cold air; he spoke distinctly, but his legs refused to carry him.

The sleighs reached the Tver Gate. The coachman inquired, 'Where shall I drive, gentlemen? To the Grabshewka street?"

"Where?" asked the bailiff.

"He is offering us a merry place," Paltussow answered him. "Ivan Alexejewith, we cannot finish Saint Tatjana's Day anywhere else."

"Dancers! Proconsul Lentulus, splendid! Take

the old man with you; don't leave me lying down, Rogo, deprecor!"

Piroshkow's eyes shone with pleasure; he nodded his head.

"Go on," said Paltussow.

"Ah, you men of habit," said the coachman to himself, and urged the horses on. After a short, quick drive, they stopped suddenly. A round lantern with reflector shone on the path. They found themselves at the entrance of a three-storied *maison de joie.*

CHAPTER XVII

EDUCATION OF WOMEN

WOMEN of the Russian intellectual classes receive a very careful education. Girls' colleges are innumerable in Russia, the idea being to provide women with the same arms as men in the struggle for civilization. These colleges are usually restricted to modern subjects, but Moscow speaks proudly of a college where the girls learn Latin and Greek. The subjects are usually two or three living languages, Russian history, geography, natural history, elements of algebra, and some philosophy. It is formidable, even without Greek and Latin. There are, however, young girls who have remained simple and charming in spite of their learning, and who coquettishly disguise their knowledge of the classics; others join the "modern" colleges, and refuse to abandon the charming privilege of their sex of introducing originality even into their spelling.

The grammar-schools (gymnasiums) for girls are very much like the French *lycées*, and in fact the programme is the same with less science—which is also the case for boys. The day-schools are frequented by the middle-class children, and the education given is very good; they have caused a healthy emulation which the institutes of the nobility feel also. To-day in Russia there are 332 gymnasiums. There are forty private schools in which the same instruction is given to girls and boys under Government control.

Female students and female doctors generally come from the gymnasium. There was a time in which these

titles suggested a family quarrel and flight to foreign lands after a bogus marriage, which remained binding in spite of the trouble we must take to believe it. The student who undertook to marry a girl of good family to free her, strong-minded enough to come herself to ask him to do her this service, kept his promises admirably, and exacted nothing from her. They left together for some Swiss or German town, and after years of misery the exiled pair returned, with full diplomas, and started on their mission of devotion. To-day parents are not so strict. The idea of a career for women is being accepted. A father of the middle class, the least liberal of men, said in front of me, speaking about his daughters, all four studying different branches, medicine, pedagogy, fine arts—"Yes, times have changed. We do not know about the future. A man is not displeased if his wife can help him if necessary. And he likes to talk with his wife about things that interest him more than he used. In any case, an educated woman is better treated."

Nothing is much more interesting than to listen to those who were young in those memorable years of emancipation and progress for Russia, which they call the 'sixties.

The first time a Russian woman asked to be admitted to the course of medicine in a provincial university was in 1861. The medical council saw nothing against her admission, provided she fulfilled the same formalities as students of the masculine sex. Then came other demands, and the presence of several women was tolerated in the course of the Medical Academy at St Petersburg; but their number grew rapidly. Ladies claimed the right of following the mathematical course, the law course, and the right already accorded was withdrawn under pretext of looking into the question. Then began the migration of Russian girls to foreign universities. Nadine Sousloff was the first to take her diplomas as doctor, 2 December,

1867, after having written a splendid thesis at Zurich. The following year an exception was made again, the half-open doors were closed, and the future doctors again took the road to foreign countries. Towards the end of 1867 Eugenie Konradi succeeded with some chances of success in presenting a petition, asking for the organization of regular university courses for women exclusively, who should go to the university when the students had finished their lectures. In this manner she obtained the creation of those superior courses to which the name of Prof. Bestougeff is attached. But the courses of medicine were only inaugurated in 1872 under the influence of the liberal ideas accepted by Alexander II., who had to overcome extraordinary resistance.

A generous girl, married to General Shaniowsky, who has been able to renew her gifts, gave 50,000 roubles to carry on the projected lectures. This was greatly due to General Miloutin. He was the Minister of War, and the Academy of Medicine was under his protection. It was he who, in submitting the plan of the new lectures to the Emperor, spoke of their utility, especially as enlarging medical aid, so insufficient in the provinces, and also of the loss of so many Russian girls who studied in foreign countries. A trial of four years was to be given, and the widow of General Yermolow was to be the inspectress. The women's School of Medicine was established at the Nicholas military hospital, in which were 1000 sick persons.

The Academy professors went there to begin their lectures, and no difference was made: they were the same as they delivered to the male students.

The Turko-Servian War of 1876 proved the valour of the students. Thirty who had already finished their five years of study obtained permission to be enrolled as doctors' assistants, and started out for Bulgaria with the

Red Cross Convoy. Six months after, the Chief Inspector of the Army Medical Service bore witness to their zeal, their presence of mind, as well as to their knowledge, both chirurgical and therapeutic. The *Turkish Gazette*, astonished to see women admitted into the army, declared that they had shown themselves worthy of the praise they had had bestowed upon them.

At the end of the war many who had attended the wounded on the field of battle were decorated, and in the winter of 1877-78, sixty students, having passed their examination with the usual jury, were made doctors. Some stayed in St Petersburg and became visiting-doctors at the hospitals, but the greater number went to the provinces and country districts.

Let us now just touch lightly on the question of the education of the daughters of the high nobility and of the bourgeoisie.

The nobles pass through the hands of governesses of different nationalities. Many people, meeting Russians abroad who shine as splendid linguists, are almost persuaded that the subjects of the Tsar are born knowing all languages—and so it comes as a surprise to them, when they arrive in the country, to find so many people speaking nothing but Russian. They learned languages in the way people in the West of Europe learn them, at college ; the tutor or the governess is a luxury.

A friend of mine in St Petersburg has two children, from ten to twelve, who speak perfectly French, English, and German. The younger is already quite a musician. She dances wonderfully: I was able to judge because I saw a ballet of her composition. What strikes me most is the expressive and well-regulated pantomime, the charming groups arranged by children who have never been to the opera. This grave and precocious child takes dancing and everything else quite seriously. One rarely sees on

other children's brows the line of application so defined, as to become almost painful. And the boy, dressed in his uniform of the military school of cadets, is evidently penetrated with the necessity of learning as a duty inseparable from the rank of which he understands the meaning. No matter his age. He is a man, a little prince: he has the manners, the politeness of one; he kisses the hands of women; he knows how to answer and how to be silent. At school he only meets comrades of his own station, and on Sunday at church the brother and sister feel as if they were some members of a privileged club of believers. At the same time, under this polish there is an exuberant spirit which breaks out at intervals. These explosions are repressed at once. The children are not the masters of the family; they keep their place, but their development is a perpetual solicitude. One father of a family, a widower, who spends a great part of the year on his property, has quite a household for his children—a doctor, tutor, a German nurse, a French maid, an English governess. And he comically relates the difficulties which arise when these ladies are too ugly for the taste of the tutor or doctor, and the bother when the case is reversed. There are the Russians who speak languages, and who are so cosmopolitan that one is struck by them. Their studies finish in the midst of foreigners: they are sent to the country itself to perfect themselves. What becomes of the girls brought up with so much care? Many of them, having received in the European capitals lessons from the most famous masters, and having brought back from the said capitals the *chefs-d'œuvre* of illustrious dressmakers to decorate their persons, play for ever the rôle of drawing-room decorating, brilliant butterflies, the most frivolous women of the world. Others keep the taste for the pleasures of the mind. Some of them have great depth of thought. Mme Swetchine, Princess de

Lieven, and many others have proved the fact. There are also many learned ladies who were fed on Kant and translate St John Chrysostom.

Special institutes are open to young girls of the nobility in all the principal towns. There are eight in St Petersburg, as many in Moscow, and sixteen in different parts of Russia. One of the most celebrated is the Pavlorsky Institute. All the pupils are boarders; the fees are small—three hundred roubles, music included. The Institute forms women of fashion, mothers of families. Half, however, of the 240 pupils, daughters of superior officers, are brought up by the State. They run the risk of becoming governesses and lady-companions, in spite of the little present in money they receive on leaving, and which is to serve them as a dowry. The future must perhaps seem hard to them—after the grandiose life they lead at the Institute. For it is a grandiose life they are leading.

The daughters of the nobility lead here what may be called a palace life. Little footsteps are heard everywhere, are on the great staircases, in the vast corridors, palpitating through the silence; an irreproachable bow, a kindly face smiles, the air is happy. The rule of the house weighs on no one. All is pleasant, even the infirmary; it would almost be a pleasure to be ill, and amusements are not wanting for the convalescent. I was shown the concert room and the ball-room: they are really splendid. The boys from the Cadet School are invited to the balls.

Nice-mannered servants perform the duties of the Institute, and wear clean little uniforms. They are foundlings from the hospital—they can go where they please after three years' service in the Institute. Was it not Peter the Great who wished all his subjects to serve the State in some fashion?

These colleges and schools, which correspond to the French *lycées*, are private or controlled by the State,

which inspects them and confers the same prerogative on those having a leaving diploma as the official establishments of the Empress Marie. The Empress Marie, contemporary of Napoleon I., took great interest in the education of young girls, founded a great number of institutions, and left them over four millions of roubles for further development. Generally speaking, there are only day pupils or half-boarders. The institutes are boarding-schools—that is a first difference; the second is that the schools (gymnasiums) admit girls of all classes and conditions, whereas admission to institutes depends on a thousand circumstances and conditions. Each institute is recruited from a different class—here, half orphans; there, daughters of officers killed in war. Many of the pupils are bursars—the rank of the parents is taken into account; in certain cases admission is given according to the vote of a council, as at a club. The schools, being day-schools, are only occupied with the education, whereas the institutions, being boarding-schools, look after the education, deportment, and accomplishments. Catharine the Great, the first to found institutions, hoped to get the pupils away from the influence of the family, and to model them to her ideal—as if they were wax.

The famous Russian author Gogol translated her ideal into a triple programme—(1) French language (for the happiness of family life); (2) piano (for the pleasure of the husband); (3) knitting and embroidery—surprises. In the different establishments the method varied. (1) piano, (2) French, (3) surprises, or (1) surprises, (2) piano, (3) French. All that has been changed—but the impress remains. When one meets a young Russian girl in the world, one can surely judge where she was brought up; if she has gestures—or moves easily—if she turns on her chair—she comes from the school. If she has a studied deportment, a knowing laugh—a carriage

of the head conscious of grace—she is from the institution. One institution at St Petersburg is called Xenia ; it was founded by an ukase issued in July 1894 ,in commemoration of the Grand Duchess Xenia, the Tsar's sister ; and as it had such a sponsor, it was established on princely lines—grand-ducally, may I say—since it was situated in the confines of a grand-ducal palace. Here is a description given by a recent traveller who visited this institution.

The carriage passed the gates on the garden side, and drew up at the porch. Porters, in long scarlet cloaks embroidered with imperial eagles in gold, hurriedly made deep bows, and took off the visitors' greatcoats. There was an immense hall of admirable height, breadth, and depth, with elegant columns ; in the midst a fine marble staircase led to the first story to which corridors formed galleries. The visitors were taken to the Directress's room, a fine room full of beautiful plants, furniture in good style, and cases full of charming curiosities. The Directress, a lady of good old Russian family, was too ill to accompany them over the building, and the inspectress undertook to show them over, and bring them back for a cup of tea at the end of their visit. Every institution has a permanent inspectress. They passed through a maze of corridors and halls, led by the inspectress and the honorary guardian—a high Court functionary who manages or protects several institutions. The visitors asked to be shown how cooking was taught. The honorary guardian was surprised at their prosaic tastes, but as a man of the world he quickly came to himself and led them into a large kitchen reserved for the pupils, and which had nothing in common with the general kitchen of the establishment. Eight or ten young girls were gathered round a stove laden with shining copper pans. Blushing, they stood still and bowed gracefully to the strangers. The bow is the rule of the house, and it gives

out, as it were, a little archaic odour which one is quite glad to smell, but that is not the only odour in the kitchen. It really had a pleasant smell. A slate hanging on the wall indicated the contents of the pans: tomato soup, breast of veal and rice, raspberry-jam roll. Practical cooking is done in the school by groups of ten—never more, and each lesson lasts three hours; the group prepares a meal for the class, and in consequence they themselves have to eat what they have cooked. There are theoretical lessons given to larger groups. These young ladies were pleased with the visitors, and as a reward they promised delicious cakes and delicacies for tea. They then went into the room beyond the kitchen; there was an admirable choice of joints numbered for the housekeepers of the future, and young cooks could learn the difference between the undercut of the sirloin and the fillet steak. The guardian tried to attract attention by talking of the chemical laboratory, but the visitors replied by asking where the pupils were taught to trim hats. Soon a lift carried them to an immense room with white wood furniture in the eighteenth-century style, with a magnificent mantelpiece of carved marble, and where the tables were arranged as counters, on which were all sorts of woman's work. Here on the shapes were hats with ribbons shaded like dead leaves, with water-green veils of gauze, and poor white birds with spread wings, rigid and motionless, victims of woman's cruelty. The young ladies stroked them gently to console them; a little farther were dresses, decorated blouses, embroidered cushions, materials richly worked in thread of silver in the Russian fashion with artificial flowers, pinks, campanulas, narcissi, roses, which the visitors could not help admiring.

The commercial section of the institution, very excellent, comprises the compulsory study of three modern

languages, German, French, and English, commercial correspondence, shorthand, etc. There were many typewriting machines which reduce one to exasperation with their clicking under such agile fingers. It was quite a contrast to indolent and immense Russia, where time and space partake of the infinite, that clicking of the cold metallic fingerboards, created for business-like America, practical England, and domineering Germany! In no country is more time spent in teaching girls mathematics than in Russia; arithmetic, geometry, algebra are very advanced. It would be an exaggeration to say that the girls are passionately fond of it. It is the desire to discipline these ardent spirits, to concentrate all the strength inclined to be dispersed, to force them to a methodical reflection and cold analysis, to give reason the sovereignty over instinct; and perhaps it is to this intense culture that the Russian woman owes her character, her faculty for initiative, and that tenacity which makes her so often superior to men. I say often—not always: let us avoid imprudent generalizations. The triumph of pure reason is sometimes only passing. A Russian proverb says, "Feed a wolf as well as you can, his eyes will always look to the forest." The guide, very proud of his mathematicians, proposed to visit a group ready for the final examination. They went to a light hall with fine polished tables; five or six young girls were animatedly discussing numbers on the blackboard. The guide waved his arm proudly: "We are working here!" "Oh, Excellence, we are not working," said a young mathematician, "we are counting the days to the holidays!" So these young ladies had not changed into reckoning-machines; they still had hearts of flesh, and wings to their hearts, and some wondered where next these wings would carry them.

The lessons of *pueri-culture* are still rare in Russian

schools, but there exists in a private school in Moscow a complete course of hygiene—under the name of hygiene of childhood. The care which must be given to a child in the first year of its life—food, natural and artificial, the use of soup and flour, the care of the mouth, the management of the child's room, the cradle, bed, the child's cries, sleep, clothes, the care of the skin, walking, first teeth, vaccination, are all dealt with. Then they go on to the schoolboy's age, to his hygiene, the question of good and harmful exercise, sports, games. The Xenia Institute, so large, into which air and light enter on every side, gives the impression of a temple of health and youth. There is an infirmary, in which all the personnel of a *lycée* could be housed. Besides the isolation rooms, there are waiting-rooms for parents, the dentist's cabinet, with so many apparatus that you shiver at the sight. Then outside a special hall for medical gymnastics. There are no less than eleven halls for the sick, with three or four beds in each, but they are rarely occupied.

The dormitories, aired from seven to midday, and locked up during the day to prevent pupils from succumbing to the temptation of slipping into the sheets at prohibited hours, are full of beds, at the head of which hangs a holy picture. Body linen and dresses are shut in numbered cupboards along the corridors. Morning and night the pupils must rinse their mouth with boracic acid; twice a month each pupil must have a hot bath, and the washing of hands before meals is obligatory. They drink milk at three o'clock, when all the courses of lessons are finished. Leaving these white dormitories, with the washstands of white marble hung about with pink dressing-gowns, they saw a large looking-glass hanging on the wall. The inspectress frowned: "A looking-glass! I must have it taken away; that encourages vanity." "Never mind," said the guardian, "leave it hanging; let

your young ladies be a little vain; that is quite right. You don't want to make nuns of them." The glass remained.

Now what kind of influence does this broad, sumptuous education have on young girls of noble blood and poor purses? The richest of them pays only 250 roubles (25 pounds) for complete board. That is to say that the administration must be out of pocket. For these 250 roubles, and most of the girls have scholarships, they are treated as imperial god-children. Those who get a certain position in the school or take medals are presented to the Empress. Yet afterwards, when they leave the palace of the Tsars, accompanied by the obsequious bows of the servants in silk stockings, they are flung straight into a life of privation, either with their own impoverished families, or in some position of mercenary labour. And shall they not suffer? And will not the beautiful vision of their childhood rise before them with a kind of home-sick feeling for what they lost? Perhaps for some of them, the weak ones. The Russian has a grand faculty for adapting himself: if he is French in France and German in Germany, at home he knows how to drink champagne if he is rich, and how to live on black bread and water if his fortune has changed. The Russian is exposed to reproaches for want of interest, but he is accustomed to such unparalleled ups and downs in life that he never thinks of being astonished or sad about them. One often meets people who ten years ago had immense property and celebrated stables, and who to-day wear shoes down at heel and threadbare coats. There is a stupefying inequality in the richest and most illustrious families. A millionaire princess sees her sister taking a class in a school; the sister visits the rich relation, she is received by all as if her fortune were equal, but no one thinks of pitying her, she herself least of all. "Take advantage of your good fortune;

do not worry about your bad fortune"—that is the philosophy of the Russian nobility. And that is why the looking-glass may hang in the dormitories without danger. And that is why institutes would gain nothing by being austere. Everywhere one sees smiling, happy faces, hears much laughter; they dance and sing, play the piano, and do gymnastic exercises. To avoid the noise and confusion which would arise from several pianos in the same room, they have cells, twenty-four of them in a row, all separated from each other by walls which do not allow the sound to penetrate. In each of these there is a grand piano; and a young girl practises at each. These twenty-four pianos, added to those in the rooms, bring the total of pianos to forty, and all can be played at the same time without the sound of any one interfering with the establishment.

The Russians are very proud of their colleges for women, but whether they are really advantageous is after all questionable. In the first place the period of study is too long, and the slender results do not justify such a laborious undertaking. Then the students come away with the idea that their education has been as good as a man's, and this fills them with a pride which is incompatible with Russian simplicity, and disgusts them with the humble duties of home life. If all these girls belonged to rich families, the evil would be lessened, but the majority are without means in a country where every class of society lives from day to day. The college keeps them eight years from their home duties, and leaves them with ambitions that unfit them for their position in life. There are therefore great numbers of *déclassées* in Russia, a state of affairs probably due to the colleges for women. The desire for a professional career is as easily developed in Russia in the brain of a girl B.A. of seventeen as it is with her sisters in other countries.

For a man to be condemned to live by lessons is sad but for a woman it is triply so !

The Russians attribute the development of female education to the intellectual progress of their country. Some might think it the sign of an endeavour to make up for lost time. They cherish the dream of, catching up in a few years with Western civilization, and every combatant has been urged into the battle, the difference of sex being ignored. It is a struggle for common freedom, and all fight on the same footing with equal strength and equal devotion. They are indignant if you suggest that there are domains with which women have nothing to do, or if you wish to limit women's activities to the usual Western customs. I know of no country except Russia, even including England, where women so willingly renounce all the privileges of their sex. It is difficult to make a Russian understand what is meant by the attributes and limitations of the feminine intelligence ; he will maintain that an intelligent woman is man's equal, and that the family is more a federation than a hierarchy. Women must therefore be as well educated as men, hence the numerous women's colleges, hence all those sexless, short-haired women-artists, students, Government officials, as for instance in the Post Office, where their metal-buttoned coats exaggerate the masculine expression of their hardened features.

The numerous colleges for young ladies have created a type of feminine *potache.* Young girls from twelve to seventeen years of age have a very free and easy manner, very different from that of, say, French girls. Being used to going out alone and to being taught by men professors, their manner is perhaps defiant, but at the same time they are more at their ease with men, less reserved, and more natural. There is another type of woman created by these colleges, that is the governess. An ugly, good-natured chatterbox of a woman, who is crazed on children

and sweets—she talks unceasingly, telling tales of college life, the practical jokes played by the pupils, her own astuteness in circumventing them. It is amusing enough, but sad, too, to think that this type of woman, useless and learned, is on the increase. We shall find her in other countries spreading her destructive influence round her.

CHAPTER XVIII

LITERARY WOMEN

BUT the higher education of women in Russia has nevertheless certain advantages. In cultivated circles the women are much better informed than French or even English women; they are interested in many more subjects, and, without paying any attention to fashions, cultivate music, literature, and the arts for their own pleasure. One feels that their education has not been obtained in fashionable convents or finishing schools. Very often they know two or three living languages, and it is the most ordinary thing to find Russian ladies going among the poor to educate them, a very beautiful way of doing charity.

Clothes play a very small part in their lives, at least in middle-class society; and even in families whose incomes are 12,000 to 20,000 roubles, and who own carriages and horses, there is very little attempt at elegance. There is no vulgar love of show, for Russian women aim at comfort and convenience and simplicity, and are eminently practical.

As everywhere else, women in Russia are divided into different classes. There is the worldly woman, like her French sister, who loves pleasure. She is not led away by passion, and if she be faithless to her husband, it is because she is seeking for amusement, and not because she loves. But in Russia there is a class of very clever women, and they give foreigners a high opinion of the Slav race. They know the language and literature of every European country—some can speak Greek and

Latin. There are young girls coming home from Dresden with their diplomas in science and literature and mathematics. They all remain womanly and charming. As a rule, the Russian woman is more learned than the Russian man, and I think she is also superior morally.

Many Russian women appear to be superior to their husbands, even when the latter are very intelligent. It is sometimes an optical illusion, but many foreigners have remarked upon it. What strikes them particularly is the independence of the women, who dare to have an opinion different to their husbands, and to express it, too, before strangers. Then, of course, Russian etiquette is not so severe as in some countries; passionate discussions are not prohibited; the women have an opportunity of joining in serious conversations, and are not condemned to the eternal questions of dresss and tittle-tattle. One does not hear in Russia the same family opinion expressed by husband and wife, in the same tone, and on every possible occasion. One does not exchange a wordless message with the eyes before giving an opinion; one may freely say what one thinks. Commonplaces are not tabooed, but sometimes questions are discussed with a conviction that carries one away. Conversation reaches intellectual heights, and, above all, women take their part in it, without any airs and graces.

Remember, too, that if the woman be free to express herself frankly, so is the man, and he may discuss with her as though she were a man. He need not gallantly spare her feelings; the opinions expressed have a certain value for the persons discussing them, and conversation is no longer synonymous with being agreeable and polite. Woman's imagination is excited by the battle, arguments follow each other hotly, and if the stranger is not used to seeing a woman throw herself so heartily into a conversation, he can but admire it.

Thanks to this freedom, one gets to know a Russian woman much quicker than a French woman or an English woman, which is fortunate, as Russian women gain on acquaintance. They are often pretty, but ungraceful, and one can tell that they are used to wearing heavy overshoes, and heavy, shapeless garments. Akin to man by their independence, they have adopted something of his ungraceful movements. Nevertheless, they are attractive and captivating, thanks to their simplicity and earnestness. When one knows them better, if they displease one the feeling is more serious; if they please, the pleasure is deeper; and if one loves them, no doubt passion is mixed with a confiding security rarely to be met elsewhere.

Russian customs, too, are so touchingly simple: women are protected by the greater calm of the Russian men, and, used as they are to fight for themselves, have no trace of self-consciousness if left alone with a man. If one calls on a friend in the evening and finds him out, custom allows the visitor to have a *tête-à-tête* with his wife. These hours of intimacy are doubly precious with an intelligent woman.

As regards Russian literary women, there is certainly a great deal of talent to be met with, but no one has as yet reached very high. Russia has given no rival to George Sand or George Eliot, she has only literary women of the second rank; but it is true that they often surpass men of the same category. The women do not complain of their fate; they are appreciated by every one, encouraged by success, and well paid by the editors. There is no prejudice against them. How could there be? Catharine the Great gave them the example. This friend of Voltaire and Diderot did not only excel in the art of reigning, but also, as a writer, tried all kinds of tales, satires, comedies, comic operas, historical dramas,

and at the same time she was editing instructions for the new code. Her critics would have sent her to Siberia if she had not been the Empress.

The second Russian literary woman was the famous Princess Dashkoff, the author of "Memoirs," President of the Academy of Sciences, and director of several newspapers, the creator of the first public course. No woman has played such an important part in the general culture of her country. After her, poets and writers of romance were only mediocre—until the second half of the nineteenth century. The Countess Eudoxia Rostoptshin had but the sentimental graces and pseudo-classic pretensions. Julia Judowsky did not get all the success she deserved, having limited herself to sing the sufferings of the woman in love and oppressed, when the new woman arose with a passion for social questions.

The years 1850 to 1860 made a memorable date in the life of the country, and the work of Marco Vastshok corresponds to it. That is the pseudonym of Marie Markovitsh, the first of whose novels dealt with the people. One feels in them an excessive idealization of the peasant, a fault which many writers had in the period of the emancipation of the serfs. Valentine Dmitrieff escaped it! Born of a peasant family in the district of Saratov, she painted what she saw, and she is up to now the most eminent of Russian romance writers. When young, she delighted in books and prepared herself for the gymnasium examination; then, mistress in a village school, she had to give up her post because fault was found with her political tendencies. She afterwards studied medicine. She was exiled for the same cause for which many of the writers of the other sex were persecuted in a country where it costs dear to have ideas and to express them. Valentine Dmitrieff did not go to Siberia as did Korolenko and many others; she spent four years in exile at Tver,

in virtue of that system so difficult to understand which sows revolutionaries in different provinces that are agitated by their very presence without the change being a very efficacious punishment. At Tver, continuing to practise medicine, she collaborated in reviews and papers. Hers is a very deep study of the actual situation in a village of Great Russia. Among her intellectual types the radicals of 1860-70 stand out. Usually she judges with impartiality the exaggerations of the Russian mind.

The social novel, born in 1870, was replaced ten years later by the psychological novel, and Krestovsky is distinguished as a writer of these.

To-day the literary movement is frankly realistic, there is little room for sentimentality; one thinks that everything has been said on adultery, etc., and one passes on to portraits of the less-favoured class of peasants.

A certain Nikolaieff has distinguished herself in criticism and journalism. She was no other than Marie Tsebrikoff, director of the review, *Education and Instruction.* The rights of women to intellectual emancipation were defended with warmth.

Among the poets let us name Anne Barikoff, translator of the principal French, English, and German poets, and among novelists Sophia Smirnoff. Rachel Shine is original, if not superior; she protests against the futility of fashionable life. She places the intellectual Israelite type in the front, pioneer of the awakening of ideas in the Jewish world.

Tatiana Shtshepkin Koupernik of Moscow is at the head of a numerous group of women. She has translated Victor Hugo, Richepin, and Rostand. She was a prodigy: at the age of twelve she dedicated a poem to the famous actor Shtshepkin, her grandfather, and at eighteen her first piece was played. And thus for thirty years Russian women have made a considerable place for themselves

in literature, and a higher one still in science. What country can boast of a mathematician above Sophia Kovalevsky? One need only recall the reception given her in Paris when in 1888 she bore away the Bordin Prize, awarded to her by the Academy of Sciences, the subject of which had been proposed six years, one after the other, by the Academy of Berlin without success, to perfect the theory, on one important point, of the movemen of a solid body. Many ladies give themselves up to astronomy and natural science. Mlle Perejoslavsiva, member of the Imperial Society of Naturalists at Moscow, was made director of the biological station at Sebastopol, and carried out several scientific missions. Mme Olga Fedtschenko, daughter of a professor, wife of an explorer, took part in the perilous journeys in which her husband met his death, leaving her to publish the observations they had made together.

Mme Rossiskaya Kagevikova directs the study of practical zoology in the upper courses at St Petersburg, sharing at the same time the work of her husband, a naturalist at the University. Mme Zerasskaya is also worthy of mention for the discovery of a star—she is also the wife of a professor. So in Russia science is compatible with marriage, and draws hearts together instead of separating them.

In the country of Rubenstein, music is the most cultivated of all the arts. Women painters are numerous, if I follow the lists of them published in the *Union*, founded at St Petersburg. We knew and appreciated the most celebrated among them, Marie Bashkirtseff, whose " Letters " and " Diary " rank her also among the writers. For a long time art schools were few and badly frequented. Now there are some in nearly all towns as far as Siberia. Admission to the Academy of Fine Arts was granted to women in 1871.

We know how many women are studying in Paris, and there are still more studying in Germany; but they mostly go to the Swiss universities, where it is cheaper to live, showing everywhere the same stoical courage and the same poverty. Those who receive help from their parents fight against difficulties as hard as their friends do; for they have all things in common: what belongs to one belongs to all. Fraternity is never seen to better advantage than in the student colonies. At Montpellier there are about sixty students, and many of them are Jewesses. They are divided into two groups of thirty, each cooking and waiting at table in turn. They hire a library and a dining-room all together, and they lodge in small rooms in the town. They dine together at mid-day, and the cooking is Russian. One meal a day. One girl's family lives in Russia and leaves her to do as she pleases. Her interests are divided between science and singing. Why should she choose? She intends to succeed in everything. There is no flirtation with her male comrades. And what a difference between America and Russia! In Russia the men do not *look up* to women; they are equals, comrades, nothing more.

In Russian universities, where the two sexes are separated, there is just the same solidarity between them.

When the manifestation at St Petersburg was repressed in the Kazan Square, the women were side by side with the men. Here is the story of one present, a female student. She was on the steps of the church when the crowd below was driven back by the police. When the Cossacks charged, a panic ensued, a terrible crush, and cries of madness and anguish. Some paces from her, a student, already fainting, was stunned by three Cossacks. She advanced quite indignant and reproached them. One of them stopped, the others turned against her. She

was knocked on the head by the terrible *nagaika*, on the arms and shoulders. With others she was arrested and dragged to the police court. There they had to pass hours in waiting. Only in the evening was food brought to them. Fifteen days' prison, then exile in the provinces. Generally speaking they were allowed to choose where they would go. She chose the town in which her family lives, where she is known, and where she will be able to give some lessons.

She is quite young, and a pretty woman, small, thin, with aquiline nose, large, sad, grey eyes, hair short cut, and her dress is very simple. She speaks French very well; her voice is sad. She would like to give lessons; would she find any pupils? I listen to this poor child quite moved. She does not seem strong enough to fight for her existence, but she is kept up by her indomitable will.

None of these brave women think of their own strength. One can reproach them with not specializing willingly. They have, with the desire to embrace all, a vague inconstancy, a burning thirst for new experience, a perpetual care for the development of their individuality, outside the work they have undertaken. The wish to devote themselves is a passion. It is not sufficient to comfort the unfortunate; they wish to share the burden of those who are heavy laden. They are the romanticists of philanthropy and intellectuality.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE

THE pleasures of the table occupy an important place in Russian life—that is because of the climate.

Before taking their seats at table, the guests, invited to a dinner in Russia, approach a small side-table, where all sorts of *hors-d'œuvres* are laid out. These form a kind of preface to the dinner, and one should be careful in yielding to the polite insistence of the host to partake of everything, as one may thus risk not being able to do honour to the real dinner. The *hors-d'œuvres* are very varied.

The small table standing in the corner of the dining-rooms holds condiments to excite appetite — smoked fish, salted fish, and fish in oil; reindeer tongues, with pickles of all kinds, and many sorts of cheese, to say nothing of caviar.

The dining table is covered with flowers.

At the end of the meal the hostess gives small bouquets to the guests, which they place in their buttonholes. The guests kiss the hand that presented the flowers.

The Russians are enormous eaters; they have many meals during the day. Both climate and custom are the reasons for this. The digestion of these great eaters is quickened by innumerable glasses of tea without sugar, and little glasses of vodka, made of potato spirit, and barley, flavoured with orange or vanilla. In most houses of the bourgeoisie the cooking is French, but national dishes are also served. Among the latter let us quote the *borshtsh*, the *konlibia*, and the *bithy*.

Borshtsh is the national soup, made of beetroot, beef, and sour cream, served *cold.*

Konlibia is a kind of pie. Slices of salmon boiled in water, thick pancakes and spinach, are put inside a large *brioche*, and the whole is covered with *wisiga*, the marrow of sturgeon, with eggs and butter. *Bithy* is a fillet of beef chopped very fine with bread crumbs soaked in milk, eggs, salt, and pepper to taste, and fried in a pan. We must also mention the *kholvdetz*, a sort of *borshch* served very cold, pieces of ice being put into the dish, and very refreshing on a hot summer day. Only Russians know how to prepare and dress the various fishes in which their rivers abound, and especially the famous sturgeon of the Volga. Chicken cutlets and cutlets *à la Puobra-jensui* are very favourite dishes. Like all Northern nations, the Russians are very fond of fruit, and enormous sums are spent on fruit imported from warm climes. Although at table French wines and champagne are mostly in honour, beer, stout, and ale are also partaken of, and the Russian national beverage, the *kvass*, is not neglected. Fresh oysters being a rarity, the gourmets pay fabulous sums for them ; fortunes too are spent in Russia on exotic fruit, foreign wines, and rare delicacies. The Frenchman says of a spendthrift that he has eaten his patrimony—*il a mangé sa fortune*—but this expression may literally be applied to the Russian, for he actually often spends his whole fortune in eating and drinking. One need only watch Russians eat in restaurants to be convinced of the truth of the statements. A simple dinner in a restaurant soon resembles a feast of Gargantua. Moscow is famous for several of her restaurants, such as *Tyestow*, where the *Zakouska*, or *hors-d'œuvres*, are a speciality, *L'Ermitage*, the *Slavyansky Bazar*, which has a reputation for Russian soups. The Russian, however, does not live in the restaurant and the *brasserie* as much

as the Frenchman does. He prefers his home life—and there is no necessity to go to the *café* for either his *apêritif* or his coffee. He gets it all at home, in the cosy comfort of his own home, unless he has decided to go out to amuse himself. Then he makes a night of it. The waiters in a Russian restaurant—*traktir*, dressed in a long white blouse, with a violet or rose girdle round the waist, are called *tshelovyek* (man), and are often Tartars—but there is always a head waiter, or *maître d'hôtel*, who can converse in French—and nowhere is the knowledge of the native language less required than in a Russian *traktir*.

Needless to add that gratuities are still in vogue in Russia, and if one forgets the waiter he will not hesitate to remind the customer of his duty and ask *natshay*—(literally, to buy tea with).

The menu is often in Russian, but in many restaurants it is in French, and will, for instance, read as follows :

3 Potages au choix,
Rassolnik—Shtshi,
Gigot de mouton braisé,
Poussins rôtis,
Salade,
Crème au chocolat.

Coffee is always taken in the restaurant where one dines, as it is difficult to find an establishment specializing in this beverage. The Russians drink vodka, but only before dinner, never after. Vodka is an appetiser, not a liqueur, a *pousse-café*, as the French call it. Cognac and chartreuse are the favourite liqueurs of the Russians with their coffee.

CHAPTER XX

LES RUSSES S'AMUSENT

WE have referred, in previous chapters, to the amusements of the Russian people. The Russians love all sorts of games and sports, the latter chiefly consisting in pugilistic encounters. The principal amusement of the women and girls of the people is the pleasure of the sea-saw. But it is singing and dancing that the Russians prefer, and of which they never seem to grow tired. Men and women of the peasantry will often dance whole nights—in summer and winter—in the open street, until they fall down from sheer exhaustion. And it must be admitted that the choreographic art of the Russians has reached a high standard, and Russian national dancers are admired and applauded in all the music-halls of European capitals. Whilst at Court and in Society people mostly dance foreign dances, the lower classes remain faithful to the national dances, which they enjoy on every occasion—when work is done and amusement begins. If they do not dance they drink, play cards, or stroll about.

Sunday is the day for strolling about and idling, as are all the numerous festivals. Some moujiks, but above all women and children, walk to a church in a neighbouring village and spend an hour or two kneeling or standing and making the sign of the cross. In the afternoon some play cards, or drink vodka and get drunk, while others stroll about the plot of grass which serves as the village street, gossiping. The men smoke continuously,

not pipes—they take too long—but cigarettes, which they roll themselves.

The peasants use a special kind of tobacco called *makhorka,* for which a schoolboy would not exchange the shoelaces he smokes clandestinely. This tobacco is the worst kind produced in Little Russia; it is coarser than German pipe tobacco and the English "shag," and has a very strong smell which most people consider pestilential. To some it is not displeasing: in any case it is so strong, and has such a peculiar odour, that you can trace a moujik by it. What makes it so offensive to most people is the fact that it is blended with the perfumes exhaled by the dirty clothes of the peasants themselves. The peasants never take their clothes off, even at night; in fact they wear them until they drop off with old age. They are made of coarse material, or of sheepskin; the leather, turned on the outside and exposed to all weathers, sometimes gives out an odour similar to that of a wet dog. Fortunately for themselves, Russian peasants are no more susceptible to what we call bad smells than children are.

The moujiks use any piece of paper which comes to hand to roll their cigarettes, the most delicate being a kind of tissue paper, of which they make little three-cornered bags, folding the end piece to make a kind of holder similar to that of the *papirosses* of the town folk.

But smoking is not sufficient occupation to while away the interminably long Sundays and feast days. Few of the peasants can read, and those who can have no books. How to spend the day becomes a problem; one can understand the attraction which alcohol has over them. Three or four little glasses of vodka, swallowed at a gulp, means drunkenness, and drunkenness means sleep, and sleep forgetfulness. Forgetfulness of one's self—is that not happiness?

Towards evening, weather permitting, the peasants assemble on feast days in the middle of the village ; while it is still light, some of the younger ones dance, or rather posture and pose in Russian fashion, mimicking the *pliasta*, which is composed of amorous or grotesque gestures, contortions, and gambols, to the accompaniment of a concertina. Most of the Russian national dances express by gesture and pantomime the various feelings of sensuality and love-making ; and it is above all the dances of the Cossacks which excel in this expression of sensuality and love-declaration. The concertina is very popular in Russia : there is at least one in every village ; its nasal and monotonous tone is very suitable to the kind of soothing music the moujik finds fascinating.

The village *virtuosi* can play the same air over and over again for an hour without ceasing ; the dancers will continue to posture, and singers to raise their voices as earnestly at the end as at the beginning. In fact the monotonous rudimentary music and primitive airs have certainly a soothing effect on the nerves.

As night falls the dancers cease, but not so the music : it goes on sometimes until midnight, if the night is balmy. Youths and girls sit on the apology for a grass plot and listen with interest, occasionally joining in a chorus or popular air. The girls sing in shrill, discordant tones, without expression ; sometimes the sudden bursts of shrill song sound more like fighting than music. The songs they sing are mostly just silly, but sometimes broadly suggestive, upon which the girls shout with laughter. So much for the village. The urban inhabitants enjoy singing and dancing indoors, and when their own apartments are not convenient they go to the clubs to enjoy themselves in society. The Russians dislike solitude.

There are clubs of the high nobility, accessible only to

those of the highest rank; and there are clubs of the smaller nobility, and artists have their clubs also; great merchants, belonging to the first guild also have their club, very sumptuous indeed, shining with gilt and blazing with light.

The two lower guilds have their club too, called the club of small merchants. So that each caste, planted, as it were, in different districts of the town, lives without coming into contact with any who are placed higher than themselves in the official catalogue. Russia is more than a century behindhand.

And yet, whilst making such a rigorous distinction between the various classes of society and scrupulously observing the degrees of the *tshin*, the Russians are in advance of the rest of Europe, for they have put woman on an equal footing with man, as regards amusement. Woman is in this respect the equal of man. Russian clubs are therefore not exclusively a privilege for Russian men. Women and children have also the right of entry, they are really family clubs, and thanks to them the small employé and the less fortunate can, with but little expense, enjoy distractions, for example, which in other countries are the privilege of the wealthy few, favoured by fortune. All the clubs have a membership of four or five thousand—even with a low subscription the total becomes quite large—and every club has its concert-room, its ball-room, a restaurant, a *café*, and a library. If anyone not well off and having but poor rooms wishes to entertain for a small sum, he can invite his acquaintance to dine at the club, and hold his reception in the club rooms. For a very small sum all his family can enjoy a concert, or some dramatic performance. For the children, the club is a positive benefit, for there are children's balls, lotteries, Christmas trees. The children of the small clerk get as much amusement as the children of the noble lords, and the mothers do not break their

hearts thinking that the children of rich people get amusements while theirs get none.

As for the dances at Russian balls, they are mostly the same as those danced at balls all over Europe. Perhaps the Mazurka alone is danced with more grace and charm by Russians than by other Europeans, as Th. Gautier once remarked. All the clubs have balls—full-dress and masked—and young people who knew each other as children do not lose sight of each other—friendship turns to love—thus the Russian clubs are responsible for many marriages. They are very pleasant for widowers, unmarried women, and bachelors, and for all those who lack a comfortable home; they spend their Sundays there and their evenings, and only go home to sleep. They play cards there, but, except at the clubs of the high nobility and great merchants, the play is not high. A game very much played in Russia is called *préférence*.

The Slav has in his blood something intense, which ice generally causes. He is extreme in everything. He went to France first in the time of Louis XV., and was charmed by the easy, elegant manners of the Court; he carried them home with him, and, conservative as he is, he keeps them still. He is an inveterate gambler, and he loses with remarkable *sang-froid*, blowing out his brains when he has lost his last bank-note.

Card-playing became a fashion in Russia during the reign of Catharine II., who set the example, and who organized nightly card-parties to which her favourites, foreign ambassadors, and diplomatists, were invited, And since the days of the great Empress, the passion of the Russians for card-playing has been on the increase. They play, not only for money, but for valuables, house, and estate. Before the emancipation of the serfs it was quite common for the nobles to play for some of their serfs—and to lose in one night five hundred or a thousand

of "souls," as the serfs were called. Card-playing is now going on in all the clubs of the principal Russian towns. The club committees of Russian clubs are not very particular about the respectability of new members, and card cheating in clubs is therefore quite common, as many professional card-players easily gain admittance to the fashionable clubs. It may often happen that one member will suddenly expose the cheat, and the latter will have to leave the club; but then the committee will also invite the exposer to send in his resignation, as such scenes only ruin the reputation of a club. Such a case occurred in a prominent club in St Petersburg in 1906.[1] Women in Russia—and in this respect they form no exception to their sisters in Western Europe—are even more passionate card-players than the men. Noble ladies assist their husbands in finding new victims, and do not hesitate, when they have lost money and jewels, to play for their honour, and stake their *favours* on the card-table! The clubs to which ladies used to have free admittance were thus turned from *maisons de jeu* into *maisons de joie.* Now ladies are not allowed to play at the clubs. But they easily find compensation elsewhere. For not only in the clubs, but also in private houses, people play and gamble with passion and alacrity. Everybody gambles in Russia, from the grand duke down to the moujik—nobles, merchants, women, and soldiers. There is no ball without card-playing. Women rush from the arms of their partners to the card-tables, and the most tragic love intrigues are played round the green tables. A woman will lose enormous sums to one of her admirers. It is a debt of honour—she must pay it, and to-morrow she rushes to the rendezvous fixed with her creditor. The money winner is satisfied—and *l'honneur*

[1] *Cf.* Stern, B., "Geschichte der Offentlichen Sittlichkeit in Russland," vol. ii. p. 347.

est sauvé ! The most respectable families, highly situated on the social ladder, do not hesitate to turn their drawing-rooms into gambling dens. An invitation to tea or supper often means nothing but a card-party, at which enormous sums will be lost—which will enable the hostess, the noble lady, countess or princess, and her charming daughters, to continue the life of luxury they are leading. House friends are always on the look out for new victims--young bloods and wealthy merchants—who are highly honoured to be allowed to have a little game with the dowager princess and her accomplished daughters. Of course, the honour will have cost him from 50,000 to 100,000 roubles, but he often thinks it cheap at the price. The most dangerous gambling dens are the salons of the big actresses and the *balleteuses* of the Imperial Opera House. After the performance, grand dukes and high Court dignitaries crowd the salons of these modern *hetairas*—and courtezans donning the cloak of art, and the visitors, victims of Venus and Bacchus, lose heavily. The police, that vigilant body, as far as Liberalism is concerned, tolerates and even bestows its protection upon the gambling dens, for they prove a valuable source of revenue.

Moscow, the holy city of the Raskolniks, is given over to card-playing even more than St Petersburg. The taverns are full till five in the morning, with a crowd of men losing everything, while champagne corks fly—in the company of girls with hearts of stone and an insatiable thirst for gold.

But still the people of Moscow talk about the demoralization of St Petersburg—that is the hatred of the old capital for the new.

The rich merchants of Moscow make men of other nations grow pale with envy. This city of low houses, with great gardens and wide streets, is sad and deserted, it looks like a huge cemetery ; and the noise of laughter

and the blaze of light only proceed from the taverns. The only sound of life is concentrated in these centres.

A distinct, characteristic trait of the Russian is his sweet melancholy and spirit of resignation. The moujik and the working man often sing and dance, but never when they are sober. Under the influence of drink only, they forget their daily misery and suffering and appreciate the joy of life. He becomes affectionate and expansive, and will drink brotherhood with the first met stranger, whom he will embrace and kiss. And therefore, no doubt, in order to forget her misery, that Russia—rich and poor, noble and peasant—drinks. The rich find oblivion and joy of life in goblets of champagne and costly foreign wines, whilst the poor content themselves with cups of vodka and glasses of *kvass*. And once the Russian starts to drink, he knows no limits. The bills of the *jeunesse dorée* or rich merchants for champagne in a night restaurant are absolutely fabulous. The Russian conception of *faire la noce*—or *faire la bombe*—is a very generous one. The Englishman makes a night of it, the Russian makes sometimes a week of it. Very often a restaurant is rented by a *viveur*, who offers a feast to his friends. All the other customers are sent away and even indemnified, and the extravagances are indescribable. It is quite usual for the party to break everything in the restaurant —furniture, glasses, windows, etc., before departing— but the proprietor is neither astonished nor annoyed. He makes a good profit, as everything has been estimated, and is put on the bill.

When he is enjoying himself calmly, the Russian goes after supper to the *Summer Gardens* or to the theatre. The Summer Gardens are immense parks lit by electricity where all sorts of attractions are to be found. Orchestras are playing, conjurers and clowns are exhibiting their various talents. There the Russians walk and talk,

drink tea, smoke cigarettes, and often indulge in a little love-making—for the avenues and secluded spots are not without their sylvan nymphs. If he does not go to the Summer Gardens he visits the theatre. As a rule, however, the Russian theatre is only patronized by the aristocracy and the wealthy classes, but not by the people. One of the reasons is simply that in some theatres there is neither pit nor gallery—the so-called popular theatres are not successful.

A play in a Russian theatre does not last very long, as in France. It is over at about 10.30, and then people go to receptions and pay visits.

St Petersburg possesses five important theatres supported by the State. They are: The Great Imperial Theatre, the Marie Theatre, the Alexander Theatre, the Little Theatre, and the French Theatre, or the Michel Theatre. It cannot be said that the prices in a Russian theatre are fixed beforehand—it all depends upon the booking and the business done by the box-office. If the play is a success, if the principal actress is a great favourite, or if the principal actor has many admirers among the fair sex—well, then, the box-office takes advantage of such circumstances, and prices go up. As the plays are over early, the Russians are in the habit of having their supper in the *foyer*, which offers the aspect of a buffet in some big railway-station. During the summer months most of the theatres are closed, and then the Russians visit other places of amusement, especially those where one can enjoy oneself in the open air!

CHAPTER XXI

THE WORKMAN

IF the son of a peasant wishes to take up a handicraft, he leaves without a penny in his pocket, fully convinced that he can find employment and wages in some company. Russian hospitality will not let him perish in the meantime. When he arrives in the town, he looks up the *Gostjinny dwor*, where all branches of handwork and trades are arranged in order. There is, for example, one row for tailors, another for shoemakers, and so on, and each trade forms a company for itself, in the same way as was done in other parts of Europe during the Middle Ages; they hold together in certain streets, as the names of the Nürnberg streets bear witness. If the peasant wishes to become a tailor or anything else he is received without any difficulty, not as pupil, not as apprentice—the Russian knows nothing of these steps —but as workman. His more experienced companions show him the most necessary things, and he finds work and wages according to the degree of his endurance. If he has specialized in any branch and got to like his calling, he tries, in the course of a year, to find employment with a German master, to learn the last secrets of his trade.

The ordinary Russian does this very unwillingly, because the regular life of a German workman is distasteful to him; but the man who strives to raise himself, and to whom the "company" or guild life does not suffice, and who wishes to make his own way, puts up with a couple of years of German restraint, to be able to work for himself afterwards. But this is an exception to the

general rule. The Russian prefers the "guild." It is his second nature, and he feels the want of it. If, for example, there is company in a gentleman's house, and the servants are together in the ante-room, they form a kind of *artél*—choose a superior and a committee to look after the furs, cloaks, and so on—and who are bound to call the others from a neighbouring wine-shop if their masters want them.

The principle of the *artéls* runs through the whole of that part of Russian life which is not circumscribed by police laws. Is it to be wondered at that such a nation finds the bureaucracy of the German pattern insupportable, and rises against it on every opportunity, and has no conscience whatever about getting the better of it?

It goes without saying that the German bears a more individual stamp, and has a greater faculty for standing on his own feet, to think and deal for himself—while the Russian wants support everywhere, and leans easily on the guilds, and is glad of the community life they offer him.

This explains the character of Russian history, and the great national deeds of which the Russian is capable, and also his tremendous power of sacrifice, by which the country has been saved more than once; and explains also why he hangs behind when great things are to be done, not by a nation, but by individual deed.

In 1899 a law was passed limiting a day's work to eleven and a half hours. The first amelioration of the condition of the working class dates from 1861, the era of the emancipation. There has certainly been progress during the last fifty years, but this progress seems to conflict with so many interests, as reforms always do, even necessary and wholesome reforms. The first effect is to divide work. Because of the large manufactories, now founded, it becomes more difficult to cope with the harvest

season, and with those 127 whole holidays which every true moujik faithfully keeps. Good-bye to the village will follow, the cities will keep the agricultural labourer all the time: they will not be able to divide their lives into two parts; agriculture will eventually be more and more neglected. To avoid this danger, the Government and many well-meaning people are trying to prevent peasants from being employed in the city factories, but they grant favours to village industries. That is why these latter industries have increased so much. One must not imagine that every Russian peasant working at a trade goes away from his home. There are six times the number of domestic workers as of workers in factories, yet in European Russia factory workers number one and a half millions, not including Finland and Poland.

When the snow falls thickly over Russia, the summer workers take refuge in their *isbas*, warmed with stoves, and an astonishing number of winter industries are produced. Where did they learn them? A great many were handed down by their ancestors. In the most distant ages the Russian peasants knew how to make pottery, they knew how to make swords, which were renowned among the Arabs, and other objects of metal. Then each association has to make everything it needs. Tradition has saved certain drawings, certain dyes, certain manners of weaving embroidery. The nobles, by having their serfs taught certain trades, developed the finger skill for which the Russian peasant is noted. Many masters in America did the same in order to give the slaves a greater value.

Let us touch lightly on the nature of some of the village industries and what they produce. Other countries, Hungary, Sweden, Ireland for example, possess industries encouraged by the State and different art societies, but

RUSSIAN TOYS

nowhere has the work done at home the importance that it has in Russia.

Peasant industries are worked in six governments, Moscow, Vladimir, Tver, Kostroma, Nijni-Novgorod, and Jaroslav, and are divided into five distinct groups: wood, metal, other minerals, leather, and woven goods. Wood is the most important. Carts and vehicles of all descriptions are made, and 2000 sleighs made of juniper wood annually leave one district. Kaluga specializes in barrels. There are 2200 workmen and 900 workshops, each workshop managed by a master —a peasant like the others. There are 87 villages in the Moscow district making furniture. The fancy goods of Nijni-Novgorod are famous; they are exported to Khiva and Persia and sometimes sold as Japanese. More than half a million wooden spoons are placed in the market at Simeonoff, and peasants use them all over Russia. They are sent down the Volga by special boat. There are 120 workshops for making toys in the Moscow district.

The skilled peasant produces an immense variety of small wooden objects, very fine indeed—amusing hollow dolls, fitting into each other like a nest of boxes. There are ten dolls, beginning with a little baby, all dressed in the national dress, one holding a loaf, another a fowl, a third with a basket. Each face differs from the other, yet remains faithful to the type of the country. Thousands of minute toys, sent to Paris under the patronage of a grand duchess, were so realistic that at the Paris Exhibition people paid enormous sums for them. They came from Vladimir, which annually sends 7000 *tarantasses* to St Petersburg.

The district of Zwenigorod manufactures baskets. Mats come from Kostroma, and the village of Simeonofka makes the lime-wood sandals worn by the peasants.

At Nijni-Novgorod also 300 men make 400 pairs a piece during the bad weather. Linen is woven at Jaroslav, and spinning-wheels and distaffs are made in most villages. Tar from trees is procured by 2000 peasants in Tver. But Tver is really the boot country: 20,000 workmen are employed in making boots. At Kimr, 55 per cent. of the inhabitants do nothing else. At the market held there, the work of 15,000 bootmakers is sold, and sent into the big towns. These bootmakers are at the mercy of the middleman, for the peasant workshops are very badly organized. The most flourishing trade in Russia is leather, specially in the Moscow district, where skins of all kinds are prepared, even kid for gloves. These skins are bought and handed to peasants, who return the finished article. At Tver 350 men produced 80,000 roubles worth of worked leather.

The preparation of furs is also in the hands of the peasants, and those of Nijni-Novgorod and Vladimir make cloaks and caps of sheepskin.

Catskin caps occupy 6000 men in one district alone. Peasant cloaks for men and women are made in Vladimir; hare skins are prepared by 1120 workmen.

Ploughs and other agricultural implements are made in the Vladimir district, and are sent throughout Russia and exported to Roumania. In a large village 4000 men are occupied in the cutlery industry. At Pawlov they make bolts which were renowned in the seventeenth century. There are 1300 men making nails at Tver, but this industry is failing owing to the invention of machinery. Jaroslav is noted for samovars and saucepans. Chains and spurs used by the cavalry are also made here and sold in St Petersburg.

The peasants of Kostroma manufacture a kind of silver jewellery sold fairly dear at St Petersburg and Moscow,

which, as far as the peasants are concerned, is very badly paid. The pretty enamel jewels inlaid with silver and fancy objects in steel are made in their homes. The Tula district is rich in minerals. Peter the Great founded a manufactory of weapons to utilize them in 1712; it employs 10,000 workmen, but this is no longer an independent industry. The imitation pearl necklaces are exported in large quantities to the Moscow district, and are worn by the peasant women.

Pottery is made in all parts of the country. There are no large factories. The peasants simply reproduce the old traditional shapes and designs, sometimes adding a little to please themselves. I saw some pieces very ingeniously decorated. The Committees who undertake the education of the potter do not interfere with their natural qualities. As one can see for oneself in the museums, learned professors and gifted artists do all they can to keep Russian art in its integrity.

Mlle Polenova gave many models to the sculptors of wood, travelling into all parts to discover and appropriate the antique productions of the national genius, that the peasant might see them for himself, as it is said that the peasant reproduces what is near him. The industrial school of Abramtzovo, a village which does nothing else but woodwork, owes its prosperity entirely to that industry. It is enough to develop the æsthetic side of any primitive industry to make it a paying concern, for example, weaving and embroidery.

More women than men are employed here. All the Russian women weave and embroider all the winter months. More often they do not leave home at all, or else they meet in some small workshop, the expenses of which are paid by some co-operative society. The best linen comes from Jaroslav, Kostroma, and Tver. In Jaroslav, to avoid dealing with a middleman, the men

become itinerant merchants, and go as far as the Caucasus with their wives' work. Sometimes the women themselves go, to get a little more than they can earn at Kostroma. There are 17,000 workshops, with 35,000 cotton looms, in Moscow. Wool-weaving goes on in most of the Russian provinces, especially in Kaluga.

Silk-weaving in Moscow is successful. Grebenkow is the Lyons of Russia. There is hardly a house without a loom. Silk and velvet owes its perfection in Vladimir to a number of old hands returning to the village and instructing the peasants. Many women are employed, but their chief work is embroidery and lace. Nearly all are lace-makers. The lace is handed over to agents, who exchange it for the materials the family has need of. They are never paid in money, but in material. It is weary work, and wears out the eyes. The same happens to the embroiderers on linen which delights the whole of Europe. Russian women are not capable of mending, but embroider most beautifully. Aprons, handkerchiefs, and towels, embroidered in Vladimir, are looked upon as works of art in many countries.

Brocades, braids, gold embroideries for church work, occupy 3000 peasants in the village of St Sergius; there are three fairs annually, and about 100,000 pilgrims are attracted there to the celebrated monastery. Stockings, gloves, mittens, and headdresses employ only women. Tailors who make caftans number about 900. Felt slippers and fishing-nets are also peasant industries. Nets are sent to the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Volga. A thousand peasants work at nets in Tver; Kaluga and Moscow make brushes. Cigarette holders are made in Moscow, where the cigarette is in as much demand as daily bread. Combs and buttons and horn objects are made there too.

Pump-handles are made at Tver, and 6000 peasants

and machine hands are employed. Clocks employ 500 in Kostroma. Musical instruments to accompany the national dancing — guitars and violins are made in Moscow, accordions in Kostroma, and flutes and zithers in Kaluga.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SOLDIER AND THE POLICE

WHATEVER has been said against the Cossacks, their cruelty, rapacity, and savage nature, the Russian soldier deserves some sympathy, for he is after all only a moujik in soldier's uniform. He is not gay, like the French soldier; he has less initiative, and this is the result of the discipline which weighs him down, but he has that resigned courage which gives heroism to him also. Philosopher, he looks on death without fear, and lives life without regret; he has suffered so much, that he vaguely understands that life on earth is only a time of trial. He has this true presentiment, that the earth holds hell for some, purgatory for others, and he dies without a murmur or regret, his eyes fixed towards those mysterious regions hidden from our sight. He is not fierce, like the Prussian; when the battle is being fought he kills—duty imposes this fearful thing on him; but the battle ended, he is good and humane, he will commit no useless cruelty; he has no feeling of hatred towards other nations, he fights without animosity, and is only obeying the autocratic Government. During those dreadful struggles undertaken by Russia to crush Poland, the Russian soldier did not show that cold cruelty which characterized the Russian officer, and this is the reason. The ignorant soldier only saw in the Pole a man like himself; not knowing history, he believed that the Poles were really subjects of the Tsar, who punished them because they had revolted, as he feels at the bottom of his heart that he would also revolt if he dared. He

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS ENTERTAINING THEIR COMRADES WITH SONG AND DANCE

did his soldier's business, knowing that he would be killed if he did not kill, but he had no hatred for the Slavs of Poland.

But it was different with the officers. The superior officers wished to get on; they knew that by showing themselves implacable towards the conquered Pole they would be agreeable to the Tsar, and so they hanged and shot, ordered old men to be knouted, and women too. This meant rapid promotion. Ambition is the motive power of much infamy.

A second feeling animated the Russian officer—jealousy. He knew history, and understood the superiority of education, and the culture and knightly nature of the Pole. He was jealous of him with that jealousy which the inferior often has of the superior—and that made him implacable.

The Russian soldier, being, after all, only a uniformed moujik, retains all the latter's mode of life, his habits and superstitions. He is intensely religious and this sense of religiosity in the Russian army is very useful to the autocracy.

The struggle of Russia against Poland was a struggle of barbarism against civilization—fierce on the one side, with the energy of despair on the other. But in the wars with other powers Russian officers are often true gentlemen, and very gay *viveurs*; they empty bottles and march gaily to their death. The struggle ended, arms laid down, they treat the fallen enemy with humanity, they show themselves sympathetic and brave. The Russian soldier is slow to listen to subversive ideas —and the cases of mutiny and disobedience are very rare. Witness the very few cases where soldiers sided with the revolutionaries during the troubles a few years ago.

In the blessing of the army at Borodino, Tolstoi gives

us a thrilling picture of the way in which religion is reverenced in the Russian army.

"'They are bringing her,' they cried, and officers and soldiers and militiamen rushed to the high road. A procession was leaving Borodino and coming along the heights. 'Our mother is coming, our protector, our holy mother Tverskaia!' 'No! it is our mother of Smolensk,' said another.

"The inhabitants of the village threw their spades away and ran to join the procession. In front of the procession on the dusty road, the infantry marched bareheaded, with arms reversed. From behind them came the chanting. Then the clergy, in priestly robes, represented by an old pope—deacons—sacristans and chanters. Soldiers and officers carried a large picture with a blackened face shrined in silver—it was the picture from Smolensk which had followed the army from there. To the left, to the right, to the front, to the rear, the crowd of soldiers ran and bowed to the ground. The procession reached the summit of the hill. The carriers halted, the sacristans swung their censers, and the *Te Deum* began. The rays of the sun were leaden, and a fresh and gentle breeze stirred the uncovered hair and played among the ribbons of the picture, and the song rose to heaven as a heavy murmur. The superior officers stood behind the priests. A bald-headed general, with a St Andrew's cross round his neck, motionless and stiff, evidently a German for he did not make the sign of the cross, and seemed to be impatient of the prayers which were deemed necessary to rekindle the patriotic spirit of the people—another general, with martial air, kept on making the sign of the cross, looking about him all the time. Peter saw many faces of his acquaintances, but he took no notice of them; all his attention was attracted by the expression on the faces of the soldiers who were looking at the picture in

feverish exaltation. It was the twentieth time of singing the *Te Deum*, and the chanters intoned the invocation to the Virgin, but half-heartedly, for they were already tired, all the faces seemed to reflect the feeling that Peter had already observed on the greater part of those he had encountered. The brows were bent, the heads thrown back, sighs were more numerous, and the beating of the breast also. A very important person, to judge by the haste with which one moved aside to let him pass, drew near the picture. It was Kutusof going towards Talavinovo to examine the land. Dressed in a long cape, his back bent, his pale eyes seemed to stand prominent in his full face. Without looking at anything he entered the circle, stopped just behind the pope, and made the sign of the cross mechanically, bent down to touch the ground, sighed deeply, and bent his grey head. The soldiers went on praying without being distracted by the advent of the commander-in-chief. Prayers finished, Kutusof advanced and, kneeling heavily, touched the ground with his forehead, and then tried, almost in vain, because of his weight and weakness, to rise; when he did succeed, he stretched out his lips like a child to kiss the picture. The generals, and then the soldiers, quickly pushing each other, did the same."

To what an extent the Government avails itself of the religious feeling of the soldiers, and continually appeals to it, may be gathered from the following document. It is a memento by General Dragomiroff, of St Petersburg, called the soldier's memento. It was distributed to all the troops as a guide while they served the flag. It appealed to the faith and good sense of the men, to their contempt of death, and to their spirit of duty:—The soldier is Christ's warrior. Do not think of yourself, think of your comrades. Perish if necessary, but save your comrades. Under fire, scatter

yourselves. March in groups under attack, for one must strike with the fist, not with fingers—foot helps foot, hand strengthens hand. One misfortune is no misfortune, two misfortunes are only half a misfortune. Breaking the ranks, that is misfortune! Only he is conquered who is afraid. Strike, do not only ward off blows. Your bayonet breaks—strike with the butt-end; if that breaks, use your fists; when your fists are bleeding, use your teeth. One only really fights when fighting to the death. In the battle the soldier is sentinel: do not let your weapon fall from your hands, even in death. Take aim for each shot: shooting right and left only amuses the devil. Be careful with the cartridges, for if you shoot at a distance, you will find an empty case when you ought to have a full one. For a real soldier, thirty cartridges would suffice in the hottest fight. Pick up the cartridges of the wounded and dead. God protects the brave. The good soldier has no sides or back—the front is always to the enemy. Always face cavalry—let it come to 200 paces, fire, fix bayonets, stand firm. In war, you will neither eat nor sleep your full, you will be worn out—that is war, and it is a difficult trade even for a soldier; but it is terrible for a *soft* soldier. But if it is hard for you, it is no better for the enemy; but you only see your trouble, not his; all the same it is there. So do not be discouraged. You will conquer! "He who perseveres to the end shall be saved."

Victory is not gained by one blow. Sometimes you will not succeed at the second or third—attack a fourth time, and more often if necessary, until you have attained your end. He who leaves the ranks during the fight to help the wounded is a bad soldier and not a feeling man. His comrades are not dear to him, but his skin is. Beat the enemy and all will be well, the wounded as well as the whole. Never leave your place in a march. One minute and you are 120 steps behind. March gaily. Rest is

not even for all at the bivouac. Some sleep, some watch. If you are in command, keep your men together solidly; give them reasonable orders, and do not command them as you would a brute. Begin by saying what they must do, so that every man will know where and why he goes. Die for your faith, for the Tsar, for Russia; the Church will pray for the dead, and also for those who will live to get honour and glory.

Never ill-treat the inhabitant, he will supply your bread. The soldier is no brigand.

Let your clothing and weapons be always in order. Take care of your gun, your cartridges, your biscuit, and your legs, as if they were your eyes. Wrap your feet well in linen, and rub them with fat: it is good.

The soldier must be strong, brave, firm, just, and pious. Grant that God give him the victory. Heroes, God leads you—He is your General!

And now a few words on the Russian police—a body which plays an important rôle in Russian life.

The Russian police is a wonderfully organized army. There are two distinct branches, independent of each other, the visible and the invisible police. The visible police maintain order: they are the municipal police, and they manage the numerous millions of subjects who must obey the will of the autocrat.

The invisible police must know the thoughts of the Tsar's subjects, know their intentions beforehand, listen to their words, and provoke them to speak their desires. Their Grand Master lives in St Petersburg. This branch forms the third division of the Home Ministry—that is why Russians usually call the police the third division—and the chief is called the head of the third division. He is very important, having the rank of general, well known for his servility, to which quality this office is always confided. He has unlimited power: he is a kind of

terrestrial and terrible God. He disposes of the life, liberty, and fortune of every Russian, from the lowest moujik to the highest noble. He gives no account of his deeds to anyone—his orders are secret. If he sends a man to the fortress—no one has the right to say, "Prove his crime!" Every one must be silent; those who speak will share his fate. So the Russians have acquired a very wise but cruel custom: when a man disappears, they forget everything about him, even his name. They drink and dance on, perhaps more than they did before, in order to prove to the third division that they have no regret for a man struck by disgrace and dead to them. The head of the visible police imprisons thieves, assassins, and revolutionaries. The head of the third division looks for the guilty without guilt, and buries them alive in a damp prison, or sends them to the mines of Siberia.

In Russia, police and society represent two hostile camps, engaged in a continuous war one against another; and the former, far from being the servant of the latter as in other countries, is practically its master. Society is always being suspected by the police department and its officials. Suspected of what? Suspected of gradually awakening to political consciousness, of gaining the conviction that a radical change from the political and economical points of view is absolutely necessary for the welfare of the country. But the Government, convulsively clinging to the *status quo*, is desperately fighting against society, crushing all the latter's attempts to gain political liberty. It is a fierce struggle. Whilst, therefore, in most European countries the purpose of the police is to repress crime, to suppress noise and disorder, to regulate the traffic, to correct indecency, and to prevent public annoyances—in a word, to establish the public peace—its aim and purpose in Russia is to exterminate the arch-enemy of autocracy—Liberalism. The Englishman looks

upon the constable and inspector as public servants, who are always ready to protect the peaceful citizens against iniquity and injustice. One becomes aware of a pleasant feeling of safety creeping over one at the familiar sight of the "bobby," and I must emphatically declare that frequent visits to various European countries have tended to increase my appreciation of, and admiration for, the police of the English metropolis.[1] But the Russian policeman is far from being the protector of the peaceful citizen. The activity, however, of the general Russian police in its endeavour to crush the hydra-head of political opposition, is almost *nil* as compared to the zeal employed by the political section. The latter secretly watches the entire Russian nation. It fights not only against facts, but also against thoughts and intentions, against reason, human conscience and consciousness! With a thousand eyes autocracy watches the Russian nation like some dangerous foe, whose manœuvres, movements, and whereabouts must be carefully studied. They endeavour to penetrate into the innermost thoughts of the people, and to read into their very souls. And if the minions of the secret police succeed in discovering —or imagine they do so—some liberal ideas in the mind of a suspected citizen, punishments will follow swiftly.

No other nation in the world has invented that crime—to be guilty without guilt! The dishonour of this invention falls on autocracy. What is a "guilty man without guilt?" *He who must be got rid of.* Then *he who is supposed to have liberal ideas,* or *who is thought to have dealings with liberals.* He who has let slip an imprudent word, or a sentence which has been badly interpreted; he who, by a terrible misfortune, finds himself connected

[1] *Cf.* my article on "The Russian Police" in "Fortnightly Review," March 1909, p. 448.

with a man who conspires. He knew nothing about it—but he is suspected.

Every Russian suspected of not having a profound horror of liberal ideas and of not having the worship for the autocracy which he ought to have for a divinity; every Russian supposed to be attacked by that hated ill, called "the liberal spirit," is looked upon as a "guilty man without guilt," and is denounced to the head of the third division, who, without any trial or report, puts him away. His power is unlimited, and while he has the power of an earthly God, he has at the same time perhaps some of the vices and faults of mankind;—it is therefore easily understood how the Russians fear to find themselves at the mercy of the head of the third division.

The secret police has many agents—some in the upper classes; one meets them at Court and among the nobility, at the gay suppers, or with actresses; they are charming, are shaking hands very frankly, and talk so as to make others talk, then they make their report, and without any remorse send to Siberia or to prison the man they called "my dear friend"—they even send their own relations. The spy is the vilest object in creation; his soul is black, if he has one at all. He is more infamous than any murderer or thief. The horrible cunning, the odious lie, the hideous betrayal, are his daily weapons. He has no moral sense, and he uses his arms without shame or remorse. He is a corrupt and degraded being. . . . Liar, he calls himself "liberal," to make another say words he would not have said, then he lies to his superiors and denounces an innocent man for cupidity. Who says the word "spy" says the most infamous word in the world. How can anyone believe such a creature? But the whole Russian nation is given over to ten thousand spies! And people are sometimes surprised that Russians are discontented with the system of government! If these persons were to

become Russian subjects, they would quickly share the discontent of the Russian liberals.

It is a shameful thing that autocracy, in the work of demoralizing the human conscience, has also attacked woman's conscience, and many women have become sufficiently corrupt to carry on the vile trade of spy. The third division pays high wages, especially if the spies are ladies of high rank!

To start a system of spies in a State, is to give the State over to the demoralization which brings about ruin. That is the crime of which the autocracy of the Tsars is guilty. It is shameful to destroy bodies, to make martyrs, but it is a much worse crime, with nothing human in it, to destroy conscience, loyalty, the honour of a nation, to attack its soul, and to pervert its mind—and he who commits this crime commits an infernal, devilish deed. So, one meets the invisible police at Court, in the drawing-rooms of the nobility, and in servants in livery; clerks in shops, workmen, coachmen, porters in the streets. They are everywhere, in all costumes, even in boudoirs where a man might reasonably expect to find only love and the lures of Aphrodite.

The struggle of the political police against Liberalism and its activity extends far beyond the confines of the Russian Empire. The centres of the revolutionary movement are situated abroad, and it is the duty of the political Russian police to keep a close watch over them. For this purpose a whole army of political agents and spies is scattered all over Europe, and not only Russians, but also foreigners in business and other relations with Russia, are being carefully watched.

One must not therefore imagine that when a Russian leaves his country he gets rid of this incubus—certainly not. He is followed by travelling spies, thousands of whom are spread over Europe; some belong to the upper

class, they are well paid by the third division, so that they may cut a good figure, and frequent Court and drawing-rooms. Each week they send a detailed report of the deeds of their fellow-countrymen, who, when they return to Russia, are arrested sometimes on account of some liberal thought expressed at Paris, Naples or Monaco. The amiable friend who denounced them was the companion to whom they often were kind—and who made them talk so that he might sell them. The Russians know what weapons the third division uses. A Russian will talk openly with a citizen of any European country but when a fellow-countryman joins them, he is silent, changes the conversation, fearing that the latter may be a spy. The following episode will sound somewhat ridiculous—but it is sad all the same—and I cannot remember it without laughing.

A friend of mine was in a drawing-room with three Russians of high aristocratic society. He began to give out liberal ideas. All three posed as worshippers of autocracy and were indignant; they praised the Russian government with enough warmth to indicate profound conviction. My friend was astonished; but a moment after, more persons came in, and he found himself alone with one of the three. "Believe me," he said, "I do agree with your opinions; but for prudence sake, I pretend to hold different ones. Those two gentlemen, I feel sure, belong to the third division." Ten minutes later one of the other two was alone with my friend, and he said quickly, word for word, what the other had said. Then the third, on leaving the house, gave my friend his arm to take him home, and began: "I am more liberal than you —I hold autocracy in horror—I acknowledge that I am working to overthrow it; but I pronounced conservative ideas just now, because of those two persons who, I am certain, belong to the third division!" The listener could

not help laughing aloud; and explained the cause of his mirth by saying that the others had said exactly the same, and the Russian replied in the following words, true but how sad: "They are right to be suspicious. The wise man must not confide in his most intimate friend, nor in the woman he worships, nor in his own brother."

A government which brings a people to this cannot be called a benevolent government. Strangers who arrive in Russia are submitted to a thousand vexations if they are of the lower class; if they have a situation or a name they are surrounded by spies, whom they can easily mistake for friendly, hospitable Russians having no desire but to be polite and to make their stay in Russia pleasant.

Now the secret police sections, with all the means at their disposal, were absolutely unable to cope with the numerous secret revolutionary organizations, but thanks to the system of *agents provocateurs* they have succeeded to a certain extent in nullifying the activity of the revolutionary movement. In order to capture the confidence of their comrades, the *agents provocateurs* arrange conspiracies and organize terrorist attacks. They, of course, inform the police beforehand, thus enabling the latter to arrest the guilty conspirators at the right moment. The *agents provocateurs* are recruited from all parts of the nation, without any distinction as to nationality, sex, age, or social status; one finds among them young girls and mature women, greybeards and schoolboys.

A word or two now with reference to Russian prison life.

Prisons and fortresses in Russia have a sinister aspect; one cannot look at them without trembling, and what gives them this terrible appearance is not so much their blackened stones, as the silence of mystery which wraps them as in a shroud.

A man thrown into an English or a French prison, innocent or guilty, knows that his family and his lawyer

can act for him; he knows that the Press is always ready to lend its assistance to the victims of injustice or error, and everything goes on in public—even the executions.

But in Russia the Press is only *tolerated*; a word suffices to suspend, to finish a paper, and the censor is most severe; the writer has Siberia, like the sword of Damocles, always hanging over him. Exile—Siberia—the prison and death. Thought in Russia is held in incredible bondage; the papers may only say what the autocracy wishes them to say, the victims cannot have their help. The arrests are made in a mysterious manner. The family must be silent, must seem as if it had forgotten the prisoner, or else the whole family is arrested. The accused man may not call a lawyer—he is in secret confinement and no one may have a word with him. In England the Home Secretary is called to account for the treatment meted out to impulsive suffragettes. In France one knows the fate of the prisoners in the various prisons; the cells are visited, and if they are found unhealthy, if the food is bad, or the gaolers cruel, the public conscience protests, journalists write, public opinion forces the hand in power, who is obliged to better the lot of prisoners. Daylight penetrates even into the cell of the condemned. A different state of affairs prevails in Russia. No one may visit the fortresses, and those who are put there seldom come out; no one knows what goes on there; the gaolers do as they please. Power has the right over life and torture, no law is over it. The Tsar is the law; if he is cruel, the law is cruel; if he is unjust, the law is unjust. The creatures he employs to execute his decrees are zealous and human, and subject to error, cruelty, injustice, and love of vengeance. The man arrested knows not where he is going, or what to expect. He is taken to a prison; he knows he is going to the shadow

of the tomb, or worse, because the tomb offers peace and the fortress gives the idea of hideous tortures.

The fortress of St Petersburg is an immense black building, elevated on an isle in the Neva. It is a military building, and the imperial burial place and State prison. By an idea difficult to grasp, the autocrats have united the bodies of the Tsars, and those who revolted against their despotism, in the same building. This may be explained in two ways, perhaps they wished to tell the victims, "Console yourselves, the old executioners are there, near you, the worms are devouring their bones—the present Tsar and the future Tsars will also come to this sad chapel, and their remains will be eaten by worms which attack the body of the autocrat with the same ease as the corpse of the peasant."

It is evident that this philosophical thought ought to console the victims of autocracy. But was the imperial burial place put there for that purpose? I do not know —another thought may have guided him who had the notion. Perhaps he wished to give, like pleasant offerings, prisoners' tears and gnashings of teeth to the spirits of the departed tyrants.

NOTES

Workmen

During summer no able adult men are to be seen in the town, the population is entirely composed of women and children and old men. The women take their husbands' place in the fields, and increase the value of the plot of land allotted to them. They gather in the harvest, and even work alone in the windmills. The men are at work in Siberia in building a railway.

There are thousands of Russian villages which are left entirely to women. For example, all able men in the districts on the western shores of the White Sea go to the cod fisheries of the Arctic Ocean during the summer; the male population of the central provinces, such as Kostroma, for instance, are attracted by the towns. In other places the *moujiks*, with the faintest glimmer of hope, leave the land to their wives, and go out into the world in search of real or imaginary fortune, where there is usually real profit to be made; the peasant, who is a good reckoner, does not hesitate to neglect his land when there is more remunerative work at hand. But very often little bands of workmen go off together in search of adventure; they may be seen any spring scattered over the country. In the winter they return to their *isba*, and go off again as soon as the snow melts; some will find permanent work in the towns, or with some rural landlord. Sometimes years will pass without their visiting wives and children, and they do not appear to suffer from it.

A Russian Fair.

The scene is a curious one, hundreds of light carts, or *telegues*, are lined up on either side of the road, others left outside the houses; they obscure the view, block up the way, and are altogether a nuisance. The unharnessed horses peacefully eat out of the carts; there are the same number of carts as of families, no one comes to the fair on foot. In the intervals of driving a bargain, the men splash about in a little river which runs across the village; a cloud

A FAIR IN LITTLE RUSSIA

FROM A PAINTING BY N. K. PIMONENKO

of dust hangs over the whole picture, shutting out the rays of the sun.

There is no very original merchandise to be bought in this dusty market—earthenware vessels, narrow-necked milk jugs, green polished bowls, and various articles in cut wood and horn more or less coarsely fashioned. What principally strikes the visitor are the large stacks of dry fish which people buy and eat as we eat cakes.

Beer and vodka are sold in the taverns, and the yellow kvass is drunk all over the country. The kvass is a kind of household drink, which every housewife prepares according to her special recipe. Napoleon's soldiers, if we are to believe Tolstoi, called it pig's lemonade. Kvass is made of various herbs and grain distilled in hot water. Sometimes it has a bitter taste, sometimes sweet, in any case it is very refreshing, and a favourite drink in Russia.

Here and there groups of hideous beggars of both sexes, dirty, ragged and sinister looking, crouch in the dusty road in rings, chanting monotonous litanies in piercing tones. Money pours into their hats and aprons. The crowd circulates in high good humour, elbowing each other in the broiling sun, laughing, chatting, and nibbling sunflower seeds, without ceasing. Some of them sample the pastries which the salesmen fry in the open air. It is a real type of Russian fair, a dirty, good-humoured, evil-smelling crowd, containing an amazing number of drunkards.

The men wear pink or scarlet blouses; the women are dressed from head to foot in startling colours, red, violet, blue, yellow, a mixture dazzling to the eyes at close quarters, but seen at a distance, through the haze, the result is a charming contrast to the grey landscape.

The Baptism of the Neva

The Baptism of the Neva is the most curious ceremony in St Petersburg. Theophile Gautier writes about it in his book "Travels in Russia." When the Neva is frozen it becomes one of the principal thoroughfares of the city.

The ice, two or three feet thick, in spite of temporary thaws which melt the snow, will not move till spring-time at the final great thaw; it can bear heavy carts, even artillery.

Fir branches mark out the way to take and the spots to avoid. In some places the ice is broken to facilitate the drawing of water which flows under the crystal floor. The water, warmer than the

air, steams through these openings, but all things are only relative, and it is better not to trust its warmth.

The Neva is a power—honours are given to her, and her waters are blessed with great pomp. The ceremony, the sixth day of the Russian January, is called the Baptism of the River. "We watched it," writes Gautier, "from a window in the Winter Palace, to which we had access by favour. The large rooms of the palace are full of the élite of wealth and position. High dignitaries, ministers, the diplomatic body, generals covered with gold lace and orders, came and went between the rows of soldiers in full uniform. Divine Service takes place first in the palace chapel. After mass, the procession goes through the rooms to the Blessing of the Neva. The Emperor, Grand Dukes in uniform, the clergy in brocaded gold and silver—priestly garments of Byzantine cut—and generals and high officials, formed an imposing and magnificent spectacle. On the Neva, facing the palace, near the quay, a chapel had been raised on light columns. In the centre, under the dome, the mouth of a well, surrounded by a balustrade, opened where the ice had been broken. Soldiers kept the passage of the river, with bare head, feet in the snow, so motionless that they might have been posts. The horses of the Circassian troops pawed the ground under the palace windows. It is strange to see the Cossacks, the Emperor's escort, in a civilized country—these warriors belong to the Middle Ages, with their saddles of Persian rugs and their coats of mail.

"The procession left the palace, and from our window we saw the Emperor, the Grand Dukes, the priests, enter the chapel, which was soon so full that one could hardly see the movements of the priests at the mouth of the well. Cannons fired on the other side of the river; a great ball of blue smoke, then the noise made the windows rattle.

"The ceremony was over, the troops retired, and the lookers-on went away quietly without any disturbance or tumult, as the Russian people always do."

Russian Clergy

The Russians are very religious; that is to say, religion plays an important part in the life of Russia. The State religion is the Christianity of the Greek Schismatic Church. Christianity was introduced into Russia in the tenth century by Vladimir I., who commanded his subjects either to be baptized or beheaded.

A Slav version of the scriptures used by the Bulgarians and Serbs helped to propagate the new faith. The Tsar is the head of the Church in Russia. The Raskolniks are Greek Catholics separated from the national Church.

In Poland the religion is chiefly Roman Catholic.

There are about 4,000,000 Protestants, about 4,000,000 Jews, and 3,000,000 Mohammedans. To the north of the Ural, there are about 80,000 Buddhists and about 25,000 heathens.

Previous to the fall of Constantinople the Russian clergy enjoyed great independence.

After the fall, the patriarchs of Kiev and Moscow took some of the power of the Byzantine patriarch.

Peter the Great formed the assembly of Bishops and high dignitaries called the Holy Synod.

Russian priests are called *popes*.

The clergy is divided into two classes—the black and white clergy. The *popes* are white clergy. The monks, from whom the high dignitaries are chosen, are the black clergy.

The Russian Church fêtes do not coincide with the Church fêtes of Western Europe. The Russian State and Church still use the Julian calendar. Time in 1900 was thirteen days behind Western Europe.

The offices of the Church are more ceremonial than among Roman Catholics. Very fine effect is produced by the chanting without any accompaniment. Church Russian differs from State Russian. Every one understands, but no one speaks, Church Russian. No matter how long the service, men and women remain standing till the end. The Russian people are full of religious feeling, and pray quite simply without thinking of other people. Russian monks wear their hair hanging to the shoulders, and long beards, and the secular clergy do likewise. They wear a high hat; and monks and bishops wear a veil which hangs down and covers the back.

There are four titles for the ecclesiastical authorities :—

1. High Eminence for the Metropolitan.
2. Eminence for bishops.
3. High Reverence for abbots and archimandrites.
4. Reverence for priests.

Bishops are always chosen from among the white clergy. They are educated in monasteries, and destined to celibacy. The monks do not number more than 12,000 for the whole Empire. Some give

themselves up to study; others less gifted make holy pictures, according to the usual type and old traditions.

All the fêtes are blessed by the Church.

The Orders are all under the guardianship of saints—St Andrew, St Alexander, St Stanislaus, St Anne, St Catherine, St George, and St Vladimir.

Picture Trade

There is a trade specially worked in Kazan and Moscow—the holy picture trade. There are numerous factories in these cities and in their suburbs. *Ikons* are painted on wood or copper and ornamented in relief with silver and gold. The eyes, hair, mouth, hands, etc., all are made by specialists, according to the type given from Mount Athos. This trade is one of enormous potentialities, for no Russian who is orthodox refuses to decorate his house with a holy picture, before which a lamp burns day and night.

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